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The Know-Nothing party in Louisville.

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University of Louisville

The Know-Nothing Party in Louisville ✓

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Faculty

of the Graduate School of the University of Louisville

In Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts

Department of History

by

Carl R. Fields ✓

Year

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Introduction

During the course of American history there have appeared at frequent intervals movements of opposition to Catholics and foreigners. Sometimes these movements have emanated from urban centers, sometimes from rural communities; sometimes the movement has been merely of local interest and at other times the opposition to Catholics and foreigners has reached such proportions as to be of major importance to the entire nation. One can understand that in the days of our infancy as a nation we were jealous of our newly won freedom which meant freedom from European religious intolerance and political oppression; one cannot as easily understand why the nativist movement and the anti-Catholic movement have so persistently maintained their importance throughout our history.

The various organizations against foreigners and Catholics are not separate movements. If one were to trace the history of such organizations one would find that the position the foreigner and the Catholic were to occupy in the United States has been an ever-present problem. This is one fact to be carefully noted because it lends significance to the study of the nativist movement in any particular period. For a study of the causal factors in the rise of a nativist movement one must take into account the entire history of the United States.

The fire of nativist sentiment, ever-present, is sometimes in a smouldering state and is frequently rekindled by the events of a relatively brief period of time, say a decade. These immediate causes are more apparent than the more fundamental ones and, therefore, their importance is sometimes exaggerated. Such a period was the decade 1850-1860, when perhaps the strongest anti-foreign, anti-

Catholic movement played such a powerful role in American politics.

The nativist movement in the 1850's helped to delay the conflict over slavery and served also to emphasize the importance of the Union. Most of the men in the United States with nativist sympathies sincerely believed that the great issues of slavery and states rights could be avoided by turning the attention of the people of the United States to a greater menace, foreign and Catholic influence. Whether or not some men were emphasizing the anti-foreign problem for personal gain, I am not prepared to say; yet it is doubtless true that the nativist movement offered more opportunity to some individuals than either the issue of states rights, or slavery. While the nativist movement helped to postpone the slavery issue, its eventual failure showed the irrepressible nature of the slavery controversy. Every weapon available to political machines as well as sincere, honest men, secrecy, incendiarism, intimidation, murder, and many others were used in a vain effort to turn peoples' minds from the burning issue of the hour, slavery; but inevitably the specter of the "African" problem loomed up to inflame anew the passions of a William Lloyd Garrison or a Robert Toombs and take the place of the "American" problem.

A brief background of nativist development in the 1850's will set the stage for a discussion of the nativist growth and activities in Louisville, Kentucky, which was one of several southern cities where nativist feeling was very strong.

CHAPTER I

THE KNOW-NOTHING PARTY IN THE STATE AND THE NATION

CHAPTER I

The Know-Nothing Party in the State and the Nation

In 1850 there was organized in New York City the "Order of the Star-Spangled Banner", a nativist group, which under its founder and leader, Charles B. Allen, was destined to grow into a national nativist political party. (1) For approximately forty-three years the nativist movement had attracted the attention of a few people, but for the most part the success of these earlier societies had been temporary. At the time of the organization of the "Order of the Star-Spangled Banner" the most powerful nativist order in the East was the Order of the United American Mechanics. By 1852, however, many members of this order had joined the "Order of the Star-Spangled Banner", which had a much better organization, and was beginning to make an impression in local New York politics.

"In default of a better name it (Order of Star-Spangled Banner) was dubbed the "know-Nothing" order by an interested public, and under that name the Order of the Star-Spangled Banner thenceforth pursued its career. The proper name of the society was that of the Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner." (2)

The name "Know-Nothing" was given to the order because when the members of the order were questioned about their party, they invariably replied, "I know nothing". A previous nativist party had called itself the "American Party", and after the secret machinery of the Know-Nothing party had been discarded in 1856, the name "American party" was adopted. That was always the official name, and not the "Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner". (3)

(1) Scisco, L. O., Political Nativism in New York State, New York; Columbia University Press, 1901, p. 66.

(2) Ibid., pp. 67, 80.

(3) "After the secret machinery was discarded, the party called itself the "American" party. However, it was always popularly

The American Party was a vast secret organization with ramifications in many states. Those desiring to be members of the party must be twenty-one years of age, believe in God, be born in the United States, have no Catholic relations, and be reared under Protestant influence. For a long time the American Party, as it was officially known, was very successful in its efforts to maintain secrecy as to its activities. Secret knocks, secret conversations, secret passwords, secret meetings and announcements of meetings veiled the politics of the party and attracted many members. Many amusing observations were made about the party, one writer picturing the party meeting in ghostly, unholy places, members carrying dark lanterns, and all pledging terrible oaths. The secrecy of this party gave them an influence in politics because of the inability of the other parties to cope with them. The American party until 1855 had no political platform and openly nominated no candidates. After much discussion, they agreed on the candidates of one of the other parties and cast the entire party vote for him. (4) It is not surprising that most amazing results on election day occurred.

The party was organized much as our political organizations known as the 'Know-Nothing' party . . . The official name of the order and of the party was always the American party and not the 'Supreme Order of the Star-Spangled Banner' as stated by James Ford Rhodes in his history . . . I have been assured by the recording secretary of the National Council and several of the surviving members of the party that it never had any other name officially than the American party." --Schmeckebier, L. F., History of the Know-Nothing Party in Maryland, John Hopkins Press, 1899. pp. 9-10.

The two authorities quoted above differ on the official name of the Know-Nothing Party. It is probable that after the party obtained national importance, the name American Party was accepted as the official name.

- (4) Perrin, History of Kentucky, p. 328, says, "... at first their nominations were made from the other political parties, and by their secret and united weight they would generally turn the scale as to them meet."

are today. There was the ward or district council, the city or superior council, the grand council or state council, and the national council.

A series of degrees bound the members in oath to abide by party decisions. Two degrees were established early in the party's existence, and in 1854 at the National Convention in Cincinnati, Kenneth Raynor of North Carolina proposed a third degree, or Union degree "having as its specific purpose the preservation of the Union." (5) Members of the party taking this oath were bound to "spend themselves" in order that the Union might be saved.

A quotation from the Louisville Weekly Journal rather adequately explains the general feeling about the Know-Nothings. "These fellows have no conventions, say nothing, do nothing. Silent, secret, self-possessed, veiled in impenetrable mystery, they contemplate from their hiding places the progress of the strife and will probably pitch in and terminate the battle in their own way." (6)

Growth of American Party

By May 1, 1854, there were fifty-four (54) local Know-Nothing organizations in the United States. In 1854 the Know-Nothing party swept Massachusetts and New York, electing a Governor and practically the entire legislature. Gardner, Massachusetts' candidate for governor, was elected by a majority of 50,000. Henry Wilson was sent by the Republican Party to the Senate, and all the Representatives elected were Know-Nothings.

(5) Wilson, H., Rise and Fall of Slave Power in America, Boston: Osgood, 1872. p. 421.

(6) Louisville Weekly Journal, August 21, 1854. (At the time this comment was written, the power of Know-Nothings had been felt in a Louisville election, August 7, 1854.)

In the New York election, 1854, the Know-Nothings elected a Know-Nothing governor and forty members of the state legislature.

In Pennsylvania, the Know-Nothings helped elect a governor and some members of the legislative body.

In 1855, the Know-Nothing party elected governors in Massachusetts, Connecticut, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Colorado Kentucky, and the party controlled the legislatures of all these states except New Hampshire. In New Hampshire, Maryland, and Tennessee, the legislatures were controlled by a fusion of Whigs and Know-Nothings; and the legislatures of New York, Georgia, and Louisiana had strong Know-Nothing minorities.

The Know-Nothing party spread rapidly westward. By July, 1854, there were 1,000,000 adherents to the party; there were 80,000 in Ohio alone, and the party estimated that the membership was increasing in Ohio at the rate of 2,000 per day. Cincinnati, in the latter part of 1854, boasted 7,000 to 8,000 Know-Nothing members. (7)

Kentucky was regarded as a stronghold of the Know-Nothing party. For the state as a whole this was probably due to the fact that Kentucky had been very strong for the preservation of the Union. In the Know-Nothing party it seemed, for at time at least, that the Union would be preserved by concentrating public attention on national rather than on sectional issues. For some time Kentucky newspapers had been calling attention to the importance of insuring national unity. In 1850 the Louisville Daily Journal had said "The Union, it must be preserved". (8) As the leader of the Whig party, Henry Clay had advocated the formation of the National Union Party.. This,

(7) Louisville Daily Journal, October 10, 1854

(8) Louisville Daily Journal, January 3, 1850.

of course, did not mean that Henry Clay would have favored the Know-Nothing party although many of his friends later joined that party. Mr. James Speed, in a letter to Mr. William R. Thompson of Shepherdsville, dated March 26, 1855, said, "No one can pretend that Mr. Clay ever was or ever could be a Know-Nothingyet, strange to say, that party which he led so long, composed mainly of personal admirers, it is said have formed a secret junto, or clique, to accomplish their wishes. Much as I dislike slavery.....I would not aid in organizing a secret party to effect that object"Further, Mr. Speed characterized the Know-Nothing party as a party made up largely of Whigs, a party that was non-committal concerning the question of slavery, a party that was also evasive to all questions concerning its platform or its purposes, a party that was a secret, oathbound organization.

There are some who regard the success of the Know-Nothing movement in the South and in Kentucky as somewhat of a mystery. (9) It is, however, not surprising that Kentucky and other southern states should have been drawn to the Know-Nothing party. With the breakup of the Whig party to which we shall refer later, the South had two main objects in mind; maintenance of Southern position in national politics, and the evasion of the slavery issue. The rapid influx of foreigners had greatly increased the power of the North, and the South took to the Know-Nothing in self-defense. In addition, Kentucky being a border state, the foreign-born element and consequently the Catholic were quite numerous as we shall see later on. (10)

(9) James Robertson, in the Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. IV, p. 52, says that the "stronghold the Know-Nothing party had taken on the population of Kentucky is one of the peculiar facts of its political history." He further asserts that this power was also peculiar because of the small foreign element in the state and the comparative harmony of the Catholic and Protestant churches.

(10) See page 18.

Kentucky had never been a very strong Democratic state; the last Democratic governor to hold office in Kentucky being John Breathitt, who had been elected in 1832. Not until 1851 did the Democrats succeed in electing a Democratic governor, and not until 1856 was the electoral vote of Kentucky cast for the Democratic party.

The appearance of a new Democratic party strength in Kentucky in 1851 was caused by the gradual weakening of the old Whig party. The Whig party had been the party of power in Kentucky, but they had opposed the adoption of a new constitution in spite of the popular demand for it, and were thus put in a rather unpopular position. Consequently when the constitution was finally accepted, the Democrats claimed credit for having "ushered in a new era of real democracy". The people were reminded time and time again that the Democrats had made this possible. One notable change that worked for the advantage of the Democrats was the provision that the time for voting in state elections should be reduced from three days to one. Heretofore, Whig wealth had taken full advantage of the long time allowed to vote. (11)

A democratic governor, Lazarus W. Powell, was elected in 1850, and the Whig cause had begun its decline. As early as 1848 Henry Clay had said "I fear the Whig party is dissolved". (12) The most telling Democratic triumph in the early 1850's was the

(11) Connelly and Coulter, History of Kentucky, American Historical Society, Chicago and New York: Vol. 2, p. 842.

(12) Colton, Private Correspondence of Henry Clay, p. 567.

election of John C. Breckenridge to the House of Representatives from a hide-bound Whig stronghold, Ashland.

"The final downfall of the Whigs in Kentucky and in the nation was brought about by the so-called Kansas-Nebraska Bill, introduced in the United States Senate by Senator Dodge of Iowa, in December, 1853." (13) The Kansas-Nebraska Bill would have been ineffective as far as slavery migration was concerned if the Missouri Compromise was still operative and "so at the instigation and insistence of Archibald Dixon, the new Whig Senator from Kentucky, the Missouri Compromise was specifically repealed in a separate clause of the bill." (14) Thus was the work of the Compromise of 1850 forever undone; the country was thrown into "extreme excitement and turmoil, and the Whig party was doomed." In the Northwest, a party with the single object of combating the spread of slavery made possible by the Kansas-Nebraska Bill was demanded. This the Whig party could not be." (15) Southern Whigs thought very differently on the question of slavery from Northern Whigs; and so party chaos reigned for a time, until the elements could be grouped into a new party. Many of the erstwhile Whigs, having no other place to go, joined a secret organization much like the native-Americans and popularly known as the Know-Nothing party. "It gave them the joy of a fool's paradise for a time, where they could forget the gaping sectional wounds and contemplate things with which they were only remotely connected and which constituted not the slightest problem for them. They ignored slavery and the menacing questions it produced to run into heated discussions on the dangers of foreigners and Catholics." (16)

- (13) Connely & Coulter, History of Kentucky, American Historical Society, Chicago, Vol. 2., p. 844.
- (14) Rhodes, History of the United States, 1850-1909, New York; MacMillan, 1928, Vol. 1, p. 175. Dixon was filling unexpired term of Clay.
- (15) Willis, p. 175
- (16) Willis, p. 175, 176

It is undoubtedly true that many politicians from the ranks of the dying Whig party took a new lease on life by allying with the Know-Nothing party. This fact partly accounts for the rapid increase in the strength of the Know-Nothing party during its inception. The Louisville Weekly Courier, for example, criticised two "old party" men, W. D. Pilcher and Humphrey Marshall for "seeking to advance themselves by riding into power on the popularity of a new organization." (17) Both of these men had been Whigs, Humphrey Marshall a fairly prominent leader. He was born in Frankfort, Kentucky, in 1812, and spent most of his life in the state of Kentucky. In 1832, he graduated from West Point, and the following year year he began the practice of law in Frankfort. In 1849 he elected to Congress on the Whig ticket. In 1852 he was appointed minister to China. He joined the Know-Nothing party in 1854 and served in Congress from 1855-1859. When the Civil war came, he sided with the Confederacy. He left Kentucky, and after the end of the war he was permitted to return to the state where he practiced law until his death. (18)

A feeling was expressed in several quarters that either the Know-Nothings would attract "old broken-down politicians," (19) or they would elect men "unhackneyed in political ways." (20)

So, in Kentucky where the main tenets of Know-Nothingism were not very popular, the remains of that party which Henry Clay had led for so long, joined the ranks of the Know-Nothings. (21)

(17) Louisville Weekly Courier, February 17, 1855

(18) Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. XII, pp. 310-311.

(19) Louisville Weekly Courier, February 19, 1855.

(20) Louisville Daily Journal, December 19, 1854.

(21) See footnote (14), page 9.

CHAPTER II

BEGINNINGS OF THE KNOW-NOTHING PARTY IN LOUISVILLE

CHAPTER II

Beginning of the Know-Nothing Party in Louisville

The exact date of the beginning of the Know-Nothing party in Louisville cannot be easily determined because of the secret nature of the party. Actually the party had been formed and had taken an active part in a city election before much interest in the movement had been aroused. Prior to the August election, 1854, about all that was known in Louisville about the Know-Nothing party was rumor. The Louisville Weekly Courier told about this order with its "flash title" in February 1854 stating that the "only uniform or insignia to be worn is a white eagle of silver or plated metal on the left breast". (1)

As the time for the election in August, 1854, drew near some indication of the presence of a Know-Nothing organization was felt; indeed one newspaper carried the following reference to Know-Nothing activity: "It is rumored that the Know-Nothing will wield the balance of power in the coming contest for city and county offices".

(2) Three or four men who were elected to a city or county office in this election of Friday, August 11, 1854, were thought by many Louisvillians to be Know-Nothings. Without any apparent concerted effort the native Americans and the German element came to blows on this election day, foretelling in a rather unpleasant manner, the grief that was to come to Louisville when the issues between the Know-Nothing organization and the Democrats were clearly drawn. Several fights occurred throughout the city, "the most serious fightoff somewhere on Fifteenth Street, between a party of Germans and Americans". In this particular skirmish the Americans came out

(1) Louisville Weekly Courier, Saturday, February 11, 1854. (No other reference to an insignia of this kind has been found by the author.

(2) Louisville Daily Courier, July 19, 1854.

second best. (3)

Some indication of the working methods of the Know-Nothings was given in this election for, contrary to the usual political methods, "those who had the least to say and were almost unknown on the stump were triumphantly elected". (4) This method of secretly endorsing a candidate was one of the most powerful weapons of the Know-Nothing party. This secret endorsement of candidates really was a nomination and this fact gave the Know-Nothing organization quite an advantage for "the tendency was general to ignore for the most part party lines and designation. Men were voted for on their merits. But in Louisville and a few other cities the Know-Nothing organization came out and succeeded in carrying its candidates into office". (5)

The power of the Know-Nothing party had not only been demonstrated in the Louisville election of August, 1854, but in various other parts of the West the Know-Nothings had made themselves felt. Far from being a Northern or Eastern party, the Know-Nothings had gone as far West as St. Louis and had taken an active role in the Missouri state elections. (6)

After the election of August, 1854, the presence of the Know-Nothings in Louisville became more than a rumor. (7) The knowledge of the Know-Nothings presence increased the respect of the local politicians for that organization (8), and also led to many efforts to expose Know-Nothingism. On September 2, 1854, "a rally of true blues was called for the purpose of staying that hydra-headed monster called "Know-Nothingism.....we shal shake no sable plumes

(3) Louisville Daily Courier, August 3, 1854.

(4) Louisville Daily Courier, August 9, 1854

(5) Connelly and Coulter, History of Kentucky, p. 845.

(6) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 26, 1854.

(7) Benjamin J. Webb, A Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, Louisville: Rogers, 1884. p. 483.

(8) Louisville Daily Courier, August 12, 1854.

over Know-Nothingism until it fails to meet us at the ballot box." (9)

While the presence of the nativist party in Louisville had been known for some time the press did not attach any particular significance to the movement until the closing days of 1854.⁽¹⁰⁾ In November the Louisville Weekly Courier carried the following significant editorial:

"The body of Know-Nothings has become so strong in this city, that as soon as political aspirations spring up their owners turn inquiring eyes toward the Know-Nothing lodges and seem to inquire plaintively and meekly, is it by your leave? It was formerly the case that men were begged to run for office, now they have to beg the Know-Nothings to let them run." (11)

The Louisville Democrat had called the attention of the people to the presence of a Know-Nothing organization in the city and had expressed some little apprehension over the secret nature of the party. The Louisville Daily Journal had said, "We outsiders, who know nothing about the Know-Nothings and their purposes are sometimes amused at the fierceness with which some of the New York papers quarrel about this new element in politics". (13) Ironically enough, a few months after this statement was written, the editor of the Daily Journal, George D. Prentice, was villified by the press of the nation as the instigator of a bloody riot in Louisville because of his vitriolic utterances against the anti-Know-Nothings.

In 1854 the Louisville Daily Journal, edited by Prentice, "the most influential editor in the South" and a "staunch Union man" (14), had not openly sided with the Know-Nothing movement. Those who saw the Whig party gradually losing its hold in the South criticized Prentice for not making an immediate stand against the new party but Prentice, saying "...I do not know

(9) Louisville Weekly Courier, Sept. 2, 1854.

(10) Louisville Daily Journal, Sept. 19, 1854.

(11) Louisville Weekly Courier, November 25, 1854.

(12) Louisville Daily Journal, December 19, 1854.

(13) Louisville Daily Journal, December 14, 1854.

(14) Cotterill, R. S., The Old South, Arthur H. Clark Company, Glendale, California, 1936.

what their principles are", did not openly condemn the party. This much he could and did do: he clearly stated that he was against any secret organization, especially of a political nature. (15) Further, Prentice at this time protested against the Know-Nothing practice of discrimination against foreigners and Catholics which he regarded as a violation of rights. By discrimination Prentice meant restriction of voting and exclusion from office:

As the controversy over Know-Nothingism increased the Louisville Daily Journal soon found itself following the example of many Whig newspapers in defending the Know-Nothing cause. (16) The following quotations show the attitude of the Louisville Daily Journal in its first efforts for the Know-Nothing party;

1. With regard to the Know-Nothing opposition to slavery the Louisville Daily Journal said, "We know of no other purpose that can occupy the attention of any man or set of men than the effort to terminate the agitation of this irritating subject of slavery and if the Know-Nothings propose to take up this subject and settle it permanently we say God Speed them in this, their patriotic labor." (17)

2. A New York paper said the Know-Nothings were in the hands of the "Union Savers" and the Louisville Daily Journal wrote that if the Know-Nothing cause was in the hands of the Union savers they were "pretty good hands for any national subject to be placed. If there is...a determined purpose in this new organization, to quiet and adjust this slavery agitation, we trust that it will be done, and that in so doing they will place it within the pole and

(15) Louisville Daily Journal, August 23, 1854.

(16) Three strong Whig Journals changed their names: the Jackson Southern became the Flag of the Union; the Oxford Whig became the Star of the Union; and the Carrollton Whig became the Union Flag.

(17) Louisville Daily Journal, November 23, 1854.

protection of the Constitution--it will never be beyond the reach of agitation until it is there." (18)

3. "We are, as our readers are well aware, no advocates of the Know-Nothings, but we feel it our duty to vindicate every party against palpably unjust imputations.....We cannot but entertain a hope, that, in some things it (the Know-Nothing party) will exercise beneficent influences.....The Foreign influence is too much wooed." (19)

4. "There may be errors and important ones, in the creed of the Know-Nothing or American party, but we again say that a party of sounder nationality does not exist." (20)

Some explanation of the causes for the spread of the Know-Nothing party in Kentucky and Louisville have been given but the importance of the major principles of Know-Nothingism, anti-Catholicism and opposition to the foreigners ~~must now~~ be shown. Was the foreign element in Louisville very strong and were their many Catholics in Louisville? This question requires rather careful analysis.

It should be pointed out that the tide of foreign immigration had increased very much and that one cause for the tension between the North and the South was the decline in the political importance of the South due to the rapid influx of foreigners into the North. Foreigners were attracted to the anti-slavery party because of their lack of experience with slavery in European countries and because they were strong nationalists.

(18) Louisville Daily Journal, November 24, 1854.

(19) Ibid., February 1, 1855.

(20) Ibid., April 6, 1855, (Other views on the Louisville Daily Journals" espousal of Know-Nothingism will be shown.

The following chart shows the trend of immigration from 1790 to
1855: (21)

Arrival of Foreigners

1790 - 1800-----	50,000
1800 - 1810-----	70,000
1820 - 1821-----	5,993
1840 - 1841-----	83,504
1841 - 1842-----	101,107
1848 - 15 mo. to 30th of Sept.--	296,387
1849 -----	296,938
1850 -----	279,980
1852 -----	439,437
1853 -----	372,725
1854 -----	368,643

1,866,397 persons of foreign birth in non-slave-holding states and
378,205 in the slave-holding states.

19,948,417 - total native and foreign population
17,737,578 - born and residents in United States
2,210,839 - foreign-born in United States, 1850

(21) United States Census of 1850, Statistical View of the United States
by J. D. B. DeBow
Washington: A. O. P. Nicholson, Public
Printer, 1854.

A little clearer idea of the immigration problem may be formed from the following chart which shows the distribution of foreigners in several of the states. (22)

	No. born in state	No. born outside state in U. S.	No. born in for- eign countries	Unknown	Total
Alabama	234,691	183,324	7,498	1,001	426,514
Arkansas	60,996	98,950	1,468	775	162,189
Delaware	55,591	10,326	5,243	9	71,169
Georgia	396,298	118,268	6,452	554	521,572
Illinois	331,089	399,733	111,860	3,352	846,034
Indiana	520,583	398,695	55,537	2,339	977,154
Kentucky	580,129	148,582	31,401	1,301	761,413
Louisiana	126,917	60,641	67,308	625	255,491
Maryland	326,040	40,610	41,011	282	417,943
Missouri	265,304	249,223	76,570	907	592,004
New Jersey	361,691	43,711	59,804	303	465,509
New York	2,092,076	296,754	655,224	4,271	3,048,325
North Carolina	529,483	20,784	2,565	196	553,028
Ohio	1,203,490	529,208	218,099	4,253	1,955,050
Pennsylvania	1,787,310	165,966	303,105	1,770	2,258,160
South Carolina	253,399	12,601	8,508	55	274,563
Tennessee	580,695	168,966	5,639	1,537	756,836
Texas	43,281	92,657	17,620	476	154,934
Virginia	813,311	57,582	22,953	454	894,800

We can see from this chart that the preponderance of immigration from foreign countries was in the North and for that reason the South feared

(22) United States Census of 1850

the political influence of the foreigners. --Note that the border states of the South had numbers of foreigners much larger than the other southern states.

By 1860 the foreign-born population in the United States had increased to 4,136,175 persons. The increase since 1850 in some of the southern states was as follows:

Foreigners - Increase from 1850 to 1860

Alabama -----	4,854
Arkansas -----	2,273
Florida -----	669
Georgia -----	5,219
Kentucky -----	28,398
Louisiana -----	13,721
Maryland -----	26,525
Mississippi -----	4,782
Missouri -----	85,971
North Carolina -----	734
South Carolina -----	1,478
Tennessee -----	15,588
Texas -----	25,802
Virginia -----	12,105
	<u>227,119</u>

Judging by the proportion of foreign-born in the various states in 1850 and the slight increase in the Southern states we see that most of the immigration into the United States was into the Northern states. While the foreign-born population had about doubled in the period 1850-1860 less than 230,000 had entered the southern states - "The states of the Lower Mississippi Valley, and the southern border states in the Valley of the Potomac and Ohio Rivers contained nearly ninety percent of the foreign-born population of the South and a large portion of the foreign immigrants were massed in the large cities, where they nearly equalled in numbers the native-born population. (23) Only in Louisville, New Orleans, Baltimore, and Savannah did the foreign-born

(23) Cole, A. C., The Whig Party in the South, American Historical Association, 1913, p. 309
Debow, Census 1850

element constitute more than one-third of the population.

In the early days of the appearance of the American party in Louisville the foreign question loomed large in the editorials of the Louisville newspapers. The Louisville Daily Journal, the organ of the Know-Nothing party said, "From all I hear and see around me it is evident that this foreign question is to override all others, even the slavery question, as we see men of the most opposite views on slavery, forgetting their differences and acting together." (25) In this same issue this further statement was made, "What the American party fears is the growth of the political influence of the foreigners-- not physical violence, but political force is not feared by the American party. The balance of power is with the foreign votes. They are united and are usually arrayed on one side". (26)

The Louisville Weekly Couriertook a slightly different position in opposing the foreign influence. That paper saw in the vast imports from other countries still another effort on the part of foreigners to undermine American institutions. "In 1853 imports from foreign countries totalled \$268,000,000. Of that amount only \$31,000,000 worth of goods could not have been produced in the United States. The remainder should have been produced in America by American workmen. Oh! Sam, isn't American cloth fit to make a coat of." (27) In a tone similar to that taken by the Louisville Daily Journal the Courier regarded "foreign influence as a dangerous thing in a country like ours. European countries would be glad to see our institutions abolished. The only way to guard our institutions is to exclude foreigners from office, and lengthen the time they must stay in America before becoming citizens." (28)

(24) DeBow, Census 1850

(25) Louisville Daily Journal, January 15, 1855.

(26) Ibid.

(27) Louisville Weekly Courier, December 2, 1854.

(28) Louisville Weekly Courier, May 10, 1855

In Louisville we find that there were many Catholics and foreigners. The proportion of Catholics and foreigners living in Jefferson county had a total population of 59,831, an increase of 19,485 over 1840. Of the total population, 15,782, or one-fifth were foreign-born--five times as many as in any other county in the state. Kenton county was next to Louisville in the number of foreign-born population, having 3,364. (29) Probably in Louisville, where there were many Germans and many Irish of the servant class, the foreign-born element constituted well over one-fourth of the population. (30)

The largest body of foreigners in the Ohio Valley was German. Cities like Cincinnati and Cleveland had a German element that was about equal to the native-born political strength. "Many of the new arrivals were political exiles from their native lands. They began at once to organize by establishing political clubs in the large cities. In January, 1852, a German Revolutionary Congress met at Philadelphia attended by delegates from several Revolutionary Unions. In 1854 an association of 'Free Germans' was formed 'for the purpose of being able to exercise a power proportionate to their numbers and adopted to their principles', with headquarters at Louisville and branches in all the principle cities of the Union." (31) The Irish Emigrant Society was also established in Louisville. A platform of principles was published and a program of measures for the reform of our government adopted to the enlightened rule of foreign revolutionists. Included in these liberal principles were statements that "religion is a private matter". (32)

(29) In November, 1854, the school trustees of Louisville introduced the teaching of German into the First Ward schools. A majority of the people in that Ward were German "One member of the board thought that all the education imparted should be strictly native American". See: Louisville Daily Courier, November 15, 1854.

(30) Mr. Temple Bodley, a reliable historian, was living in Louisville during the period of Know-Nothing supremacy. He told the author that the foreigners were very powerful in Louisville. He also attributed the large foreign element in Louisville to the fact that so many servants were Irish.

(31) Cole, Whig Party in South, p. 314.

(32) Abbott, Edith, Historical Aspects of Immigration, Select Documents, University of Chicago, Illinois, p. 504.

The Free Germans were opposed to "Sabbath laws, Thanksgiving days, prayer in the Congress and the legislature, oath upon the Bible, introduction of the Bible in free schools, exclusion of atheists from legal acts". (3) Further, according to the Free Germans "admission to citizenship should be rendered as easy as possible to immigrants". (34) The fear of radicalism was one thing that caused a violent reaction against the foreign element. The Union of Free Germans in Louisville at one time advocated the abolition of the Presidency and the Senate, the abrogation of Sunday laws and oaths taken on the Bible, and other reforms that greatly aroused the members of the Know-Nothing party. On the question of slavery a leading German paper had said, "Since the maxim of slavery is established 'No union without slavery' the friends of humanity are obliged to lament the passing of the Union". (35) The Louisville Daily Journal said, "All we desire is to show our people that the foreign population have banded together by secret associations to tinker at the (Know-Nothing Party) and pervert its purposes and designs". (36) The Daily Journal was suspicious also of the "screen of a foreign language".

In Louisville and many other cities, particularly southern cities, the presence of German communities had caused considerable trouble. The customary Sunday religious observances were many times disregarded by the liberal thinking Germans. Many opponents of the American party scoffed at the idea of including in the American platform of 1855 the acknowledgment of the existence of God. "It was asserted that a very large proportion of the Germans, who compose a very large proportion of the anti-American party, are infidels, who scoff at the idea of God as the mere figment of an addled brain." (37)

(33) Abbott, Edith, Historical Aspects of Immigration, Select Documents, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, Illinois, p. 504.

(34) Ibid., p. 505.

(35) Louisville Daily Journal, July, 1856

(36) Ibid., July 21, 1855.

(37) Ibid., July 18, 1855.

Frequently Sunday liquor gatherings, sometimes numbering in 12,000, aroused the press of Louisville against the inconoclastic Germans. Because of the strength of the foreigners and their apparent disregard for American standards many people heralded the arrival of the American party. The Daily Democrat was pleased at the organization of the "American Party, or Association.....they are gathering around the standard of morality and republicanism." (38)

The German reaction was rather pronounced, many of them threatening to discontinue the Democrat unless the series criticising German liberality were banned. Many German elements, protesting against the "sham of liberty" contemplated the organization of a new political party. (39)

In 1855 a foreign secret society, according to the Louisville Weekly Courier, was organized in Louisville for the express purpose of opposing the American party. Three clubs were organized in every ward and were composed of Democrats and foreigners although the Democrats disclaimed membership in the "Sag-Nicht Party", as the new group was called. The real nature of the Sag-Nichts' purpose is shown in the platform of principles laid down in a convention in Columbus. First, the organization pledged itself in hostility to nativism in every shape and especially to the extension of slavery. Second, the Sag-Nichts pledged themselves to receive and welcome all foreigners. The Louisville Daily Journal had considerable respect for the Democratic political machine composed of Democrats, foreigners, Catholics, and a few "old line" Whigs. According to the Louisville Daily Journal "the majority of the political opponents are Germans, Irishmen, and other foreign-born citizens. The general issue is between foreignism and Americanism". (40)

In 1841 Louisville had a population of 47,460. The chart on the next page gives the approximate strength of in the various denominations

(38) Daily Democrat, May 16, 1854.

(39) A. C. Cole, The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850-1870, MacMillan & Company, 1934, N. Y. pp. 141, 142.

(40) Louisville Daily Journal, July 9, 1855.

in Louisville in 1850. (41)

Denomination	Number of churches	Number people accomodated	Value of property
Baptist	12	4,920	\$ 21,240
Christian	3	1,350	19,300
Episcopal	4	1,650	52,350
Jewish	1	600	13,000
Lutheran	3	1,750	18,500
Methodist	20	10,380	111,300
Presbyterian	10	5,450	136,100
Roman Catholic	4	7,140	120,000
Unitarian	1	700	15,000

In 1853 the Catholic Diocese of Louisville, which had been created in 1808, embraced the entire state of Kentucky and was presided over by Bishop Martin L. Spaulding, who had succeeded Bishop Kerrick on June 11, 1854. In his diocese there were fifty-six churches, eighty-six chapels and other stations, forty clergymen, one ecclesiastical seminary, thirteen literary institutions, and a Catholics population of 45,000. This would mean, on the basis of the population of Louisville and the rest of the state, that Louisville had approximately twice as many Catholics in proportion as there were in the rest of of the state.

Throughout the whole story of the Know-Nothing party there were many controversies with the Catholics. It is desirable to point out one or two major points of difference between the Know-Nothings and the Catholics. In the first place the Know-Nothing adherents denied that Catholics could be one hundred percent loyal Americans. The Louisville Daily Journal and other Know-Nothing newspapers endeavored to prove that the Catholics were bound to consider their allegiance to the church as paramount to the state and to consider the power of the Pope as the supreme authority. The Louisville Daily Journal quotes a statement of Innocent III to the effect that "it is necessary for salvation for everyone to be subject to the Roman pontiff". (42) Regarding one's relationship to his country the above statement fairly representative

(41) DeBow, J. D. B., Seventh Census of the U. S., 1850, Superintendent United States Census: Washington, 1853. pp. 643, 635, 637-639.

(42) Louisville Daily Journal, July 3, 1855

of the general idea held by Know-Nothings regarding Catholics. Not only that, but also the Know-Nothings condemned the Catholics as foes of religious liberties. "No fact can be established by plainer and more incontrovertible evidence than the fact that genuine, Orthodox Roman Catholics, believing in the doctrine of the Popes and the Roman Catholic church in all the ages of its existence, are the inexorable foes of religious liberty.....the allegiance of Americans to a Roman potentate is not the allegiance of American citizens." (43)

In the opinion of the Know-Nothings the wealth of the Catholic church was being used to undermine American institutions. While this opinion had been held for some time events of 1853 and 1855 gave the Know-Nothings further cause to criticize the Catholics. Between 1853 and 1855 a change in the status of church lands greatly increased the power of the bishop. By a decree of the Baltimore Council of Bishops all Catholic church property was conveyed to the bishop. By their decree one hundred million dollars worth of property in the United States, was placed in the hands of the Catholic Bishops. (44) The Louisville Daily Journal and other Know-Nothing organs construed this centralization of authority as another instance and proof of Catholic perfidy.

The Catholics in Louisville saw in the organization of the Know-Nothing party an organization working to destroy the Catholic church. There were two principle charges the Catholics brought against the Know-Nothing order. First, the anti-Catholic movement had been started by disgruntled Whigs who were jealous of the strength of the Democratic party, to which most of the Catholics belonged. The Whigs repeatedly accused the Democrats and the Catholics of being undemocratic and unpatriotic, Know-Nothing sympathizers frequently laid the charge of political aggression at the door of the Catholic hierarchy. The Democratic press recalled that one of Kentucky's great leaders had been Bishop Flaget, appointed as Bishop of Bardstown in 1808. To the charge that

(43) Ibid., July 22, 1855.

(44) Louisville Weekly Courier, quoted from Danville Tribune, April 7, 1855. I have found no other reference for this.

Catholics were being favored in public offices in Louisville the Courier offered proof that of one hundred persons in the public pay "the only Roman Catholic aggressor on the city Treasury was one young lady teacher, accidentally elected by the Board of Education". (45) Despite the anti-Catholic utterances of the Know-Nothing party Bishop Spaulding was of the opinion that many members were high-minded men motivated by sincere purposes. However, he thought that after growing in strength for some time, many undesirable elements had gradually taken control of party policies. Then, Bishop Spaulding accused the intelligent members of the Know-Nothing party of playing on the "gullibility of the masses to advance their own thoroughly selfish purposes". (46) Many people in Louisville were certainly very "gullible" regarding the political activity of the Know-Nothings.

In addition to the charges of political aggression made against the Catholics, a far more serious point of controversy was the religious. The Catholics charged that the guiding spirit back of the Know-Nothing movement in Louisville was the Louisville Protestant League. (47) According to Bishop Spaulding this Protestant organization had banded together to expose "the abominations of the Papacy". (48)

Discrimination against Catholics holding office certainly existed in Louisville and caused Mr. Benjamin J. Webb, the leading Catholic layman in Louisville to say, "Catholics are not all fools.....they will be compelled for the sake of peace, to form communities all their own in different parts of the country, where, having popular majorities, they will be forced into office..... Thus will be brought about the very state of things which members of the new organization effect so much to deprecate." (49) In answer to the contention

(45) Wilson, Samuel, History of Kentucky, S. J. Clarke Publishing Company, Chicago and Louisville, 1928, Vol. II, p. 421.

(46) Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, p. 483.

(47) Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, page 513.

(48) Ibid., p. 513 (No other reference to the Louisville Protestant League has been found by the author.)

(49) Ibid., p. 517.

of Bishop Spaulding that Protestants were trying to destroy Catholicism we have the Baptist view that for several reasons this organization (Know-Nothing) was peculiarly repugnant to the Baptist churches....."Baptists have never been very favorable to secret societies even when they were purely social"..... Religious proscription was "directly repugnant to one of their most cherished principles. Much confusion and disorder prevailed among the churches during the prevalence of this political organization." (50)

Prior to the meeting of a Know-Nothing convention in Louisville in February, 1855, support for the Know-Nothing cause was obtained from a source that had been originally bitterly opposed to Know-Nothingism. In 1854 a campaign was conducted to organize the "Society of Temperance". On December 13 and 14, 1854, a convention of this Temperance organization met in Louisville to nominate candidates for the state election of August, 1855. George W. Williams was nominated for governor and James G. Hardy for lieutenant-governor. A check had been put on the temperance movement "by the universal excitement consequent upon the formation of a new political party in the state." (51) The temperance organization counted on the support of the Know-Nothing organization. "All the churches, save the Catholic, favor us, I believe, too, that the Know-Nothings will take up Mr. Williams. In 1840, when a member of constitutional convention, he with Garret Davis (prominent Know-Nothing) asserted the true principles of Americanism". (52)

Referring again to the hope of Know-Nothing support another speaker said, "No one expects the Democrats to favor us.....an essential part of its strength is formed of those foreign voters. Our only hope is from the

(50) Spencer, J. H., History of Kentucky Baptists 1765-1885, N. P. Author 1886, pp. 714, 715.

(51) Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, p. 713.

(52) Speech of D. D. Spear before the Temperance convention in Louisville December 23, 1854, quoted in Louisville Weekly Courier, December 23, 1854.

Whigs and the Know-Nothings. I fear the Whigs for they imagine themselves in the Majority. As for these Know-Nothings.....I have prayed for their success. They and the Temperance people must unite.....Who tipples chiefly? Foreigners. Who mostly sells the accursed stuff? Foreigners." (53)

As the Know-Nothing movement increased in importance the Temperance movement decreased. Mr. James Hardy, Temperance candidate for lieutenant-governor, was also nominated by the Know-Nothings for lieutenant-governor in their convention in February, 1855, which greatly surpassed the Temperance convention in interest. (54) The Temperance group gradually merged into the Know-Nothing party as the issue between that party and the Democrats became more pronounced. (55)

At the same time that the Know-Nothings and the Democrats were preparing for their convention the Whigs were making plans for their state nominating conventions to be held in Louisville, February 22, 1855. The Louisville Daily Journal recognized in the political situation in Louisville four distinct elements: Temperance, Know-Nothingism, Locofocism, and Whigism. Interestingly enough the Journal believed that the Whig principles would remain distinct and separate from the principles of the other parties--"When the Whigs of Kentucky meet in convention--they will meet as Whigs, not as Mainelawites or Know-Nothings". But, the Whig convention did not meet. Pleading the necessity of caution in a "period of political transition like the present, when old parties, seem toppling to their fall.....it behooves the Whig party... to act with the utmost prudence and discretion." (56) A rival paper also wrote, early in February, 1855, of the probable meeting of a Whig convention

(53) Louisville Weekly Courier, December 23, 1854

(54) Spencer, History of Kentucky Baptists, p. 713

(55) Connelly and Coulter, p. 847

(56) Louisville Daily Journal, February 8, 1855

"and a combination of Whigs with each of the other parties of the state (not Democrat)". (57) But the expected Whig convention "ended in a Know-Nothing convention in Louisville and a Whig assemblage.....will only have to perform the mournful duty of attending the funeral of their old organization..... Farewell to the name Whig." The Democrats were "not at all surprised that the Whigs have gone into Know-Nothingism." (58) The Whigs blamed their political woes on foreigners.

In January, 1855, the Know-Nothing State Council was in session at the Louisville Hotel. At least they were supposed to be in session, but because of the secret nature of their actions, there is no definite statement about this meeting, certainly not while the meeting was in session. According to the Louisville Weekly Courier, "about the only real information at the time was mere rumor. It is said by some that 'sam', a name derisively given to the Know-Nothing Party, is tarrying with us a few days. We have met a great many individuals suspected of close intimacy with 'Sam'.....persons of this sort are crowding the town. Notice the hotel registers and you will observe the names of many not wholly unknown to fame. These, it is imagined, gathered yesterday, according to appointment at Odd Fellows Hall, where all the preliminary exercises were had, such as appointing president, secretary, etc.,.... Among the speakers yesterday were General Pilcher and the honorable Humphrey Marshall. The former had buried the tomahawk of Locofocoism. Somebody says, though nobody of course knows, that the chief object of the present gathering is to fix up a ticket for Governoe and Lieutenant-Governor. Colonel J. S. Williams is favored for Governor and Captain W. C. Bullock is favored for Lieutenant-Governor". The Council adjourned without making any nominations for

(57) Louisville Daily Democrat, February 9, 1855

(58) Ibid., February 23, 1855.

officers. In this January meeting there was considerable difference of opinion and for that reason the meeting adjourned to meet in February. (59) The Council delegates had been nearly divided in their views on gubernatorial candidates. About one-half of them favored J. S. Williams and John Hardy, the Temperance leaders and the other half favored other candidates. The Louisville Weekly Courier expressed the opinion that Williams and Hardy would win easily over all the other candidates.

On Washington's birthday, 1855, the State Know-Nothing convention met in Louisville. Among the candidates considered likely to win the nomination for Governor were Judge Williams V. Loving of Russellville, Judge Bullock of Louisville, and Judge Robertson of Lexington.

Finally Judge Loving won the nomination for Governor and James G. Hardy, a former Democrat, won the nomination for Lieutenant-Governor. (60) The decision on the candidates for these two highest state offices was not at easy. There was considerable wrangling over the choice for state offices or as one newspaper said, "they agreed to disagree". (61) The reason for this difference is not hard to find. The Know-Nothing party certainly was not a harmonious group. Their organization was for reasons of expediency. Consequently, they found it difficult to agree on men for public office although they were all in substantial agreement with the party platform. Many delegates who had been so long divided in sentiment were finding it very hard to unite. The Louisville Weekly Courier in commenting on the convention intimates that there was some difficulty in deciding on candidates when it said, "the Know-Nothing convention has at last hatched a governor". (62) Judge Loving soon resigned in favor of C. S. Morehead. The reason given for Judge Loving's resignation was ill health.

(59) Louisville Weekly Courier, January 27, 1855.

(60) Louisville Weekly Courier, Saturday, March 3, 1855

(61) History of Ohio Falls Counties, L. A. Williams & Company, 1882, Vol. I

(62) Louisville Weekly Courier, March 3, 1855

Since one of the important principles of the Know-Nothing Party was secrecy regarding their choice for public officials the knowledge of the choice for governor and lieutenant-governor caused some observers to say that Know-Nothingism was no longer secret but out in the open in the political campaign. Some even recognized the "Whig Party in disguise". (63) "Abolitionism and Know-Nothingism have taken it (the Whig Party) to their foul embrace and hugged it unto death. With their hideous kisses they have stifled its breath until it is as dead as death itself and can never be resuscitated." (64) As we have stated before, the Whig Party was already dead so the above statement is important only because it shows the attitude of some of the opponents of the Know-Nothing party.

(63) Willis, p. 167.

(64) Connelly & Coulter, Vol. 2, p. 846.

CHAPTER III

THE SPRING ELECTIONS OF 1855

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Spring Elections, 1855

True to American party principles the support of that party for candidates in the municipal elections of April, 1855, were not revealed. The Know-Nothing party pledged secrecy and that gave it considerable additional strength. According to the Louisville Weekly Courier "Sam seems to be quite complacent and takes things very comfortably, while the anti-Know-Nothings are holding meetings nightly and are fuming and fretting, and are kicking up pretty considerable of a fuss generally.....Hundreds of persons in this city who sympathize with its objects and aims will vote for its nominees". (1) In the election the Democratic organ called attention to the fact that heretofore major political parties did not nominate in local elections. Each man ran independently. (2)

Extra police were assigned by the mayor to various wards to insure an orderly election. No serious rioting occurred.....but "voters who were not of the right sort, in the estimation of these patriots (Know-Nothings) were kept from voting effectually." (3)

The Know-Nothings succeeding in electing their candidate, John Barbee, mayor by a majority of 3,070 votes over James Speed. James Speed was mayor of Louisville at the time of the election and he had refused to run for reelection, contending that his term as mayor did not expire until 1865. On May 9 Judge W. F. Bullock ruled that Mr. Speed was right and that he should continue to serve as mayor. The Circuit Court of Appeals later reversed

(1) Louisville Weekly Courier, April 7, 1855

(2) Daily Democrat, February 17, 1855

(3) Ibid, April 9, 1855.

Judge Bullock's ruling. The Know-Nothing party already controlled all the other city offices and the city employees were already regarding John Barbee as the legal mayor when the Circuit Court of Appeals made its ruling. (4)

The action taken by the city administration in regard to the controversy over the election for mayor is recorded in the Journal of the General Council of the City of Louisville, as follows:

"Whereas, John Barbee was elected Mayor of the City of Louisville by the qualified voters thereof at the late general election held on the first Saturday in April, 1855, and a certificate of election has been awarded him by the General Council and he has taken the oath of office prescribed by the charter of ordinances of said city.....

"And whereas also James S. Speed, the late incumbent, in the office of Mayor of the City of Louisville has refused to deliver to the said Barbee the Mayor's office, furniture, books and papers and the seal of the city and pretends that he is still the mayor of said city for the ensuing year and entitled to exercise the authority and receive the emoluments of said office and it now becomes necessary for the General Council to estimate some rule of conduct in recognizing the authority of one or the other of the claimants of said office. Therefore, be it resolved by the General Council of the City of Louisville that said Council will recognize John Barbee as Mayor of the City of Louisville for the term of two years from and after this date (April 30, 1855) or until his successor in office shall be elected and qualified and that said Barbee shall be entitled to exercise the authority and receive the emoluments of said office.

"Resolved further that from and after this date said Council will neither receive from said Speed any communication nor send to him for his approval any ordinances or resolutions nor in any other manner recognize him as Mayor.

"Resolves further that the Auditor, Treasurer, Clerks, and all other executive and ministerial officers of said city are hereby directed to recognize and respect said Barbee as Mayor of said city." (5)

"The Know-Nothings swept the city and elected their candidates by large majorities." (6)

The election gave very good signs of what could be expected in the state election of August 1855, both as to the strength of the Know-Nothing party and the possibility of conflict between the Know-Nothings and the for-

(5) Joint Resolution of the General Council of the City of Louisville, May 2, 1855.

(4) Collins, Richard H., History of Kentucky, Collins & Company, Covington, Kentucky, 1882, Vol. I., p.74

(6) Louisville Weekly Courier, April 14, 1855.

sign, anti-Know-Nothing element. A Democratic sympathizer saw in the April election an indication that violence would be used in order to defeat the Democrats in the August elections. The vote in the second and the eighth wards was particularly large "confirming the charge that the polls in those wards were under the complete control of mob law," (7) meaning the Know-Nothing party.

The Courier also pointed out that "the election will prove incontestably that Kentucky soil is peculiarly adopted for the vigorous and permanent growth of true American principles." (8)

According to the Louisville Daily Journal further claimed that native Americans had been intimidated at the polls and "barred from voting by a formidable rush or pressure from foreign-born citizens". (10)

The Louisville Weekly Courier at this time was following the most unprejudiced course in the controversy over Know-Nothingism. Consequently its account of the election is probably more trustworthy than that of the other Louisville newspapers. The gist of the Courier's comments are to the effect that the Know-Nothings, an "American" party, had conducted themselves in an un-American way. A German military unit had been given a cannon to care for before election day and this had aroused some native Americans to such an extent that they proceeded to try to take the cannon away from the German unit. As a result one man was killed and several were wounded. (11) This was one of the preliminary incidents of election day. Then in answer to the charge made by the Louisville Daily Journal that an unusual number of foreigners were being naturalized pre-

(7) Louisville Weekly Courier, April 14, 1855.

(8) Ibid.,

(9) Louisville Daily Journal, May 7, 1855

(10) Louisville Weekly Journal, May 11, 1855

(11) Ibid., April 7, 1855

paratory to their voting on election day the Courier replied that "during the past month not over twenty-five had been naturalized." (12) In fact a growing apathy among the foreign element in Louisville had been noticed as the Know-Nothing party become more aggressive.

The following report by the Courier of the election day disturbances gives a fairly accurate, unbiased account:

"The first ward polls was the principle theatre for the display of intemperate order on the part of anti-Americans. A report was circulated that the Sage-Nichts (anti-Americans) were going to take charge of the polls. This started a counter move on the part of the American party. All day long foreigners and Americans were milling around the polls. Trouble was started by each side thinking the other side was trying to prevent their votes. The foreigners had a preponderance in numbers but the Americans had the advantage in will and muscle. Both were trying to vote and fight but this became wearisome, fighting being substituted for voting. Members of each side actively participated in voting and fighting." (13)

The Louisville Weekly Courier fairly takes the "inconsiderate friends of Americanism" to task, "innocent foreigners on the street and in their own homes were beaten unmercifully.....the houses of some Germans were entered and their property destroyed". (14) The Louisville Weekly Courier concludes, however, that many of these outrages were provoked and that both parties were about equally to blame.

Before taking up the events in Louisville connected with "Bloody Monday" two very significant events were happening in the nation that deserve some mention. First, the state election in Virginia, in which Henry A. Wise, a Democrat, defeated Florney, the Know-Nothing candidate, in the race for the governorship, is important because this election really showed the great weakness of the Know-Nothing position. Second, the Know-Nothing convention which met at Philadelphia, split on the slavery issue. The weakness of the Know-Nothing movement was clearly shown by these two events and for that reason they de-

(12) Ibid.

(13) Louisville Weekly Courier, May 12, 1855

(14) Ibid.

serve brief mention.

In Virginia, the first state election of the year, Henry A. Wise, the Democratic candidate for governor was opposed by a man named Florney, the Know-Nothing candidate. "The Whigs of Virginia flatter themselves that they will defeat Henry A. Wise.....To accomplish this they have abandoned the notion of a Whig convention and handed over their effects to the Know-Nothings." (1) Unfortunately for the Know-Nothing cause Florney made the mistake of bringing the Catholic question into the campaign and, since the sentiment of the South was not particularly opposed to Catholicism, this action took some of the strength from the Know-Nothing cause. "Wise made a vigorous campaign, " succeeded in fixing upon Know-Nothingism the imputation of intolerance and of prescribing a religious test as a qualification for office", (16) and defeated Florney by a 10,000 majority. (17) The Know-Nothing party, over-confident in this campaign, did not take the stump actively in Florney's cause and did not successfully refute Wise's charges. The "Basic Principles of the American Party in Virginia" made no mention of Catholics but favored religious toleration. (18)

There are two significant conclusions to be drawn from the Virginia Campaign. First, slavery was the real issue before the country and not Catholicism. The Southern states could not be aroused over the dangers of "Popery". Second, the Know-Nothing principles failed to attract Democratic votes. A majority of 10,000 was a "usual Democratic majority". (19) These two brief conclusions are, of course, closely related; one lends significance

(15) Daily Democrat, February 7, 1855

(16) Cole, A. C., Whig Party in the South, p. 318

(17) Rhodes, History of United States from Compromise of 1850 to the final Restoration of Home Rule at the South in 1877, New York, MacMillan Company, 1910 p. 88.

(18) Cole, A. C., Whig Party in the South, p. 317

(19) Ibid., p. 318

to the other.

Although the Democratic party in Virginia had decisively defeated the Know-Nothings this fact was not accepted by all as the end of the Know-Nothing Party. With this election out of the way the next election of great interest was in Kentucky. Victory was predicted for the American party by the St. Louis Intelligencer in the following words: "It takes the thoroughgoing, ambitious, impassioned, patriotic, office-loving, eloquent and heels-over-head Kentucky politicians to do justice to such an institution as the American party, and they are doing it." (20)

The second important political event in the summer of 1855 was the Know-Nothing convention in Philadelphia in June. Edward B. Bartlett of Covington, Kentucky, was elected president of the convention. Bartlett was a former Democrat and according to the Louisville Weekly Courier, a slave owner. His selection was termed a "damned Massachusetts trick". (21) by Kentucky Know-Nothings, because in some quarters Bartlett was considered an abolitionist.

The great question before the convention was that of slavery. The resolutions committee submitted a majority report which recommended that Congress maintain the existing laws on slavery and further stated that Congress ought not to prohibit slavery in any territory or in the District of Columbia. The platform containing this famous twelfth section was adopted by fourteen Southern states, the states of New York, District of Columbia, Tennessee, and Minnesota. Raynor of North Carolina suggested that all reference to slavery be stricken out. His motion was defeated, 80 to 59, and the national Know-Nothing party was split, Henry Wilson of Massachusetts leading twelve northern states from the convention. Following the convention at least seven Northern states

(20) Quoted in the Louisville Weekly Courier, June 9, 1955

(21) Louisville Weekly Courier, June 16, 1955

and a number of Southern states drew up party platforms. Obviously the party had split. As the Louisville Weekly Courier so aptly stated, "the question now is 'Sambo' instead of 'Sam' and 'Africa' instead of 'America'." (22)

On July 3, 1855, the Know-Nothing party in Louisville met to ratify the action taken at the National Convention in Philadelphia. Opinion in Louisville was rather divided on the merits of the platform. The Louisville Daily Democrat pronounced the platform as unsound but the Louisville Daily Journal, the Know-Nothing organ, after deploring the slavery plank, "the stolen creed of Democracy", said, "The sound and noble principles of the Philadelphia convention will soon carry everything before them even at the North, if Kentucky, Tennessee, and other Southern states shall succeed in maintaining them in the great conflict near at hand". (23)

Ward delegations of the Know-Nothing party met in the Courthouse square to ratify the national Know-Nothing platform. A group of German Republicans, pro-American, carried a large banner to the mass meeting bearing the words, "We came here to live, not to rule." Enthusiastic speakers addressed the crowd from either end of the speakers platform and the meeting adopted the following resolution:

"That this meeting approve, ratify, and confirm the doctrines and principles of said platform as the best national ground on which we and every true American can stand for the safety and the perpetuity of the Union and to secure the blessings of liberty to ourselves and our posterity." (24)

The Louisville Daily Journal applauded the "ratification of the Second Declaration of Independence, the platform of the American party".(25)

(22) Ibid., June 23, 1855.

(23) Louisville Daily Journal, July 25, 1855

(24) Louisville Daily Journal, July 5, 1855

(25) Ibid.

CHAPTER IV

THE ELECTION OF AUGUST 6, 1855 - "BLOODY MONDAY"

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While the National Convention was going on and the ratification of the convention platform was taking place in Louisville the local political parties were perfecting their organizations preparatory to taking part in the August elections. The Know-Nothing party was rather confident. The leaders in Louisville looked forward to the August elections, believing that "the Ides of March will work wonders in Kentucky". (1) The Know-Nothing leaders believed that the party met a real need better than the defunct Whig party in that it found leaders in men who were open to conviction.

A number of Know-Nothing Councils organized in Louisville formed the nucleus of the nativist political organization. A list of some of these councils and their slogans follows:

1. Jackson Council, "By the eternal, the Union must
and shall be preserved."
2. Young American Council, "We emulate the virtues
of our sires."
3. Jefferson Council, "The price of liberty is eternal
vigilance."

Other Know-Nothing Councils were the Washington, Falls City, Union, Boone, Billings, and Liberty. (2)

Almost from the beginning of the Know-Nothing party an opposition party had existed. The Louisville organization was given the nickname of the Sag-Nichts by its opponents. The charge made frequently against Know-Nothings, that of secrecy, could just as fairly be made against the Sag-Nichts.

(1) Louisville Weekly Courier, June 13, 1855

(2) Louisville Daily Journal, July 3, 1855

The Sag Nichts, composed principally of foreigners were organized into squads of approximately ten each, having a commander^{who}/was responsible for their presence at meetings. The Louisville Democrat acknowledged the existence of the Sag Nicht organization but insisted that they were merely aids to the Democratic party and not integral parts of the party organization. The Louisville Times maintained, however, that the Sag Nichts included the whole of the "Democratic party. The Louisville Weekly Courier estimated that the Sag Nicht organization had a membership of about 2,000--"this is about the strength of the whole anti-American organization in Louisville." (3)

In addition to the Sag Nichts a national Democratic organization known as the Democratic Association, had been forming for the purpose of defeating the Know-Nothing_o things. The Louisville Weekly Courier considered this the best of the Democratic organizations and warned the Know-Nothing organization in Louisville against being over-confident. The Democratic Association was formed to aid the Sag Nichts although it was separate and distinct from that organization. (4) The Louisville Daily Journal considered the Sag Nichts to be a gang of toughs and the Democratic Association to be for the purpose of appealing to a better class of Democratic voters. (5)

The race for governor was between Charles S. Morehead, the Know-Nothing candidate, and Beverley Clark, the Democratic candidate. Morehead, as stated above, was a substitute candidate for William V. Loving, who declined to enter the race because of poor health. Morehead was acceptable to most of the Know-Nothings in Kentucky although he had been known as an anti-nativist a few years before this nomination. (6) Morehead was born in Nelson county in 1802, had

(3) Louisville Weekly Courier, April 27, 1855.

(4) Louisville Daily Journal, June 24, 1855

(5) Ibid., July 4, 1855

(6) Louisville Weekly Courier, January 13, 1855

served his state in the legislature and as Attorney General, and had also been a member of Congress. He had been a close friend of Henry Clay and a co-worker with him for the Compromise of 1850. On the whole, he was a very able candidate, one certainly capable of winning many Know-Nothing votes and also many votes from those who still were clinging to their "Whiggery". James G. Hardy was the Know-Nothing candidate for lieutenant-governor, James Harlan, Attorney General, and R. C. Wintersmith, Treasurer.

Both Humphrey Marshall, the Know-Nothing candidate for Congress from the Louisville district, and William Preston, had distinguished records of public service. William Preston was born near Louisville in 1816, the son of William Preston, an officer under General Anthony Wayne. Preston was a soldier in the Mexican war and served with distinction. In 1849 began his real period of public service when he was made a delegate to the constitutional convention. From 1850 to 1852 he served as a member of the House of Representatives and in 1852 he took Humphrey Marshall's place as a Whig member of Congress when Marshall went to China as minister. When the Whig party broke, Preston joined the Democratic party and in 1858 he was appointed minister to Spain. When the Civil War came Preston threw his lot with the South, was exiled but permitted to return to Lexington in 1866. In 1868 and 1869 he again served a member in the House of Representatives, this time from Fayette County. (7)

The Louisville Daily Journal quotes the following from Daniel Webster regarding Humphrey Marshall: "Humphrey Marshall is an able man, a very able man; I have heard him upon two occasions and I regard his ability of the highest order. I consider Humphrey Marshall at this moment the greatest man of his age in the United States".(8) The contest in Louisville was not only one of principles but also one of outstanding personalities, both with enviable

(7) Dictionary of American Biography, Vol. IV, pp. 205, 206.

(8) Louisville Daily Journal, June 19, 1855.

records as public servants. Marshall had been minister to China under Fillmore.

For sometimes prior to the election there was considerable excitement and a growing spirit of hatred between the two parties. By July 28, 1855, the Weekly Courier could say "many persons will fight at the drop of the hat." (9)

The bitter feeling that existed in Louisville prior to election day may be judged by the tone of the editorials. The newspapers were eager to prevent any form of disturbance but they were more eager to arouse their own particular party members. In the appeal to the emotions and not to the intellect the Know-Nothing organ had a decided advantage. Their comments could be colored, all sorts of insinuations could be hurled at the Catholic church and foreign organizations and about the only reply from the Democratic organ was a denial. This lacked the sensational appeal of the Know-Nothing organs. Most of the following excerpts are taken from the Louisville Daily Journal, but they give a very accurate description of the feeling prior to election day. Also these quotations show the extreme views of George D. Prentice, editor of the Journal, who later blamed for much of the trouble occurring on Bloody Monday.

1. Quoting from Innocent III: "It is necessary for salvation for everyone to be subject to the Roman pontiff." (10)
2. Reference to Catholicism: ".....a doctrine that places the supreme political sovereignty of America in the Roman pontiff instead of the American people." (11)
3. "The Louisville Democrat itself and the rest of the anti-American organs have been working desperately for many months to create the impression that the members of the American party are violently enraged against the foreigners and desirous of crushing them in the dust or driving them out of the country." (12)

(9) Louisville Weekly Courier, Saturday, July 28, 1855

(10) Louisville Daily Journal, July 3, 1855

(11) Ibid.

(12) Ibid., July 10, 1855.

4. "Another anti-American candidate proclaimed that the Germans and Irish shall vote even at the cost of a fight half a mile long." (13)
5. "Until the light of Protestantism shone in the world there was no religious freedom."
6. "Let the foreigners keep their elbows to themselves today at the polls. There's no place for them in the ribs of natives.....They(Know-Nothings) may have to encounter fire and steel but they will vote."
7. "Fellow-citizens, shall the shouts of triumph that echo through our streets tonight, be raised by American voices or shall they resound in the harsh tones of Ireland and Germany?"(14)

It is significant, in view of the above statements, that very few articles of incendiary nature was printed in the Democratic organ, the Louisville Daily Democrat.

One suggestion made in the Louisville Daily Journal deserves special attention. As early as August, 1854, the voters of Louisville had been handicapped by not having a sufficient number of polling places. Referring to the election of August, 1854 the Know-Nothing organ had said, "We cannot but think that a grievous wrong was done to the citizens of Louisville by the failure of the General Council to multiply the number of polling places in each ward. The result of the election shows that a large number of voters in Louisville were cut off from the privilege of voting." (15) So, in the summer of 1855 the question of having enough polling places came up again. Prentice met the situation by suggesting that in all cases naturalized citizens should stand aside and wait until the native vote had been counted. A longer time to vote was usually taken by naturalized citizens than native citizens and Prentice used this as one reason for allowing the native vote to be cast first. (1

Considerable buying party support was evidenced by the accusing newspaper articles that appeared during the month of July, 1855. The Louisville

(13) Louisville Daily Journal, July 14, 1855.

(14) Louisville Daily Journal, August 6, 1855

(15) Louisville Daily Courier, August 9, 1854.

(16) Louisville Daily Journal, August 6, 1855.

Daily Journal maintained that "more than 800 active and influential anti-Americans in this Congressional District, all paid for their time, are making the work of electioneering and organization the business of their lines.....The most important Sag-Nicht agency in this canvass is that of money." (17) The Democratic Associations require members to pay a fifty-cent fee, and others by voluntary or forced subscription contributed to the Anti-Know-Nothing funds. "The Anti's have more money than in any other district in the state. It (meaning anti-Americans) has more than military rigor and precision." (18) Captains were placed over every five (5) anti-Know-Nothings and he was responsible for six votes. An agent works on every five doubtful voters offering to purchase votes of those Americans whose principles are not inflexible. At every anti-Know-Nothing council meeting a report was made of the progress in dealing with this doubtful element. A letter from Frankfort, quoted in the Louisville Daily Journal said that "every species of trickery is being resorted to by the anti-American party to defeat us in August. Our friends must so organize as not only to be able to cast their utmost strength at the polls but to mark and exclude every fraudulent voter." (19)

The pre-election activities of Bloody Monday did not stop with editorials. Actual threats of violence were uttered and a number of actual clashes preceded the climax Bloody Monday. The Louisville Daily Journal says it has been accused of being "violently enraged against the foreigners and desirous of crushing them in the dust or driving them out of the country. We have no doubt that the anti-American leaders and demagogues would hastily rejoice at the prospect of a collision between the two parties in August." (20)

(17) Louisville Daily Journal, July 17, 1855.

(18) Ibid.

(19) Ibid., July 27, 1855

(20) Ibid., July 12, 1855.

"The incendiary harangues and conditional threats of the anti-American leaders are well-calculated to prepare men's minds for scenes of fearful violence." (21)

The editor of the Louisville Daily Journal learned that a very muscular man of the Lower Ponds district had been offered a large sum of money by the anti-Know-Nothings to take a stand at the First ward polls on election day. "In all earnestness we appeal to the influential men of both parties not to anticipate any outrage, any violence of the rights of freemen, and not to dream of such madness as arming with deadly weapons for the election." (22)

While most of the editorials were incendiary the newspapers also professed their desire for an election free from fighting. The attempt was made to have the election in a single day and so unusual precautionary measures were recommended. One of the most reasonable requests was for two or more polling places in each ward. According to the city charter only "one voting place for each ward could be established and no assistant clerks could be appointed". (23) The Democratic organization in Louisville had insisted on two or more voting places in each ward but the City Council "made it utterly impossible to poll the entire vote in the First, Second, and Eighth wards." (24) "This is the last trump card of a great party." (25) This same opinion was expressed more fully in the Daily Democrat.

"We wish the public abroad to understand how a Know-Nothing Council, and Know-Nothing authorities here generally, provide to carry the ensuing election. There are about 1,400 voters in the First ward and we to have but one place of voting, one clerk to record the names. He cannot get through more than half of these votes between the hours of 6 a. m. and 7 p. m.To accomplish the work effectually the polls are to be taken by the Know-

(21) Ibid.

(22) Louisville Daily Journal, July 18, 1855

(23) This is, of course, a Know-Nothing interpretation of the Charter

(24) Louisville Weekly Courier, July 30, 1855

(25) Ibid., August 11, 1855.

Nothing party until all their votes are polled.....In this way an oath-bound, secret organization is to suppress the voices of a majority." (26)

Judge Garland of the Jefferson County Circuit Court appointed 32 election officers for the August elections. Polling places for the election had been designated in each ward by the City Council. According to an older law the election was to be controlled by a judge representing each political party. A Know-Nothing judge and a Sag-Nicht judge would properly have officiated at this election. Of the thirty-two men appointed, both judges and clerks, twenty-eight of them were reported to be Know-Nothings. The Louisville Daily Journal boasted of this. According to the Louisville Daily Democrat, only "three or four of the thirty-two election officials" were Democrats or anti-Know-Nothings. (27) The Louisville Weekly Courier also pointed out that "Judge Garland had refused to appoint swift and competent clerks who were recommended to him". (28) Whether this is true or not, it is probably true that the majority of election officials were Know-Nothings.

Many citizens had already anticipated that an unusually large police force would be needed on election day and the Know-Nothing organ suggested that the "police force, being inadequate, the American party would appoint a sufficiently strong man from their own order and also asked that its aid be accepted by the city authorities". (29) The Louisville Daily Journal was informed that the mayor had already adopted a policy of appointing an additional police force "without regard to party." (30)

This was a policy frequently followed at election time. The appointments were of course temporary. (31) In the election of August 6, 1855,

(26) Louisville Daily Democrat, July 31, 1855, (Voting was a slow process since all naturalized citizens were required to present proof of their citizenship.)

(27) Louisville Daily Democrat, August 1, 1855.

(28) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(29) Louisville Daily Journal, July 24, 1855.

(30) *Ibid.*

(31) See Joint Resolutions of the General Council of the City of Louisville, April 5, 1855.

there were fifty additional policemen appointed to aid in the safe conduct of the election. (32) This made a total of eighty policemen. (33)

As election day approached excitement swelled and events of the preceding week gave ample evidence that the election would be hotly contested. Before election day riots occurred in various parts of the city. Houses belonging to foreigners were damaged, unoffending citizens were attacked on the street, and a Catholic church where firearms were supposed to have been stored was visited. Violence and street fights were nightly occurrences.

On Saturday night preceding election day a gunsmith of Louisville said that he had cleaned and put in order over two hundred guns for the Irish living in that neighborhood. Also a large quantity of ammunition had been stored in some houses on Main Street belonging to foreigners.

According to the Louisville Daily Journal, the Daily Democrat says, "that we and our sworn brothers have taken an oath not to appear at the polls with knives and pistols and brass knuckles. We certainly mean to keep that oath. We have not the least thought of breaking it. " (34)

A William R. O'Brien reputedly "a violent Sag Nicht bully" attacked a Mr. Keller Saturday night on Preston Street, near Green. This, according to the Louisville Daily Journal is a sample of the "violence nightly attempted and continually contemplated by bullies of the Sag Nicht party". (35) The next day the Louisville Daily Journal carried an apology for the above statement, having found out that Keller had attacked O'Brien and not vice versa. This detracts somewhat from the story of the Sag-Nichts bully, O'Brien.

The Louisville Daily Journal accused a Mr. James Meriwether of

(32) Daily Democrat, August 18, 1855

(33) Not until after the second charter were the law enforcement officers in Louisville called "policemen". Prior to that time they were called "watchmen".

(34) Louisville Daily Journal, July 14, 1855.

(35) Ibid., July 23, 1855.

saying that "either he had subscribed or he would subscribe fifty (\$50.00) dollars to arm the Germans and the Irish of Louisville with knives and pistols on election day". (36) Meriwether denied this in the Saturday paper.

Riots in the lower part of the town occurred during the week of Friday, July 20, 1855. Two people were shot near Chapel and Main Streets; a Mrs. Lee, and Mr. Stephen Alford who was shot in the arm. Two houses belonging to Irishmen were stoned, one in the alley between 10th and 11th, and Market and Jefferson, and the other in the alley between 12th and 13th, and Market and Jefferson. (37)

On Sunday night the "American Executive Committee" went to the polling places to see that the polls were properly opened. According to the Louisville Weekly Courier this Committee went "with the requisite refreshment". (38) This probably meant weapons for use against the anti-Know-Nothings. "By daybreak the polls were taken control of by the American party..... we commend them forever to the admiration of outlaws." (39)

Monday, August 6, 1855, is one of the blackest days in Louisville's history. Bad blood on both sides, aggravated and intensified for several days previous by distorted representations of preparation for serious work, culminated in a terrible and most disgraceful riot. Before the close of this sad day in Louisville's history a little boy was to see from his darkened window the sky aglow with the light of fires kindled in the course of this bloody affray. This boy, now a man, recalled the excesses and hatreds of "Bloody Monday" to the writer and some of his observations on this affair appear in the following story of that undemocratic election day.

(36) Louisville Daily Journal, July 14, 1855.

(37) Ibid., Friday, July 7, 1855

(38) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855

(39) Ibid.

For the most part the voting around the polls was quiet and orderly; only in the areas away from the polling places did any violence take place and not then until late in the day when excitement over election returns reached its highest point. As stated above, very early in the day the American Executive Committee had the polling places under control and no doubt they made full use of this advantage. All newspapers are more or less agreed that the polling places were in the possession of the Know-Nothing party. This fact is sufficient to show that the Know-Nothings intended to control the elections and that they were not especially concerned with having a fair election. By mid-afternoon, when the violence started, the American party had polled a very large vote but after the beginning of hostilities all thought of voting ceased.

At the first, fourth, and sixth wards there was some violence. According to the Louisville Daily Journal, the Democrats were heavily armed, the foreigners having been led to believe by party leaders that the American party was seeking to interfere with their vested rights. At the fourth ward polls the American party had some difficulty in controlling the foreigners, but they succeeded in not permitting a single foreigner to vote. The Louisville Daily Journal wrote that in some polling places, particularly in the second ward "it was impossible for Americans to vote" so completely had the Germans captured the polls. Other newspapers do not refer to the discrimination against the Know-Nothings at any of the polling places. An observer of some of the incidents and a careful student of American History, Mr. Temple Bodley, who was for many years a prominent Louisville attorney, told the writer that the Know-Nothing party virtually controlled every polling place.

More serious riots occurred in the upper wards. "The vote cast was a political one and nearly all on one side. No show was given to the friends of Preston who were in the majority, but who in the face of cannon, muskets, revolvers, could not, being an unarmed and quiet populace, con-

front the mad mob". (40)

The sixth ward, one of the quietest and generally the most peaceful, was the scene of some of the worst excesses of "Bloody Monday". In fact this polling place was the only one in which there was any unusual degree of disorder. "There was no opportunity for fighting since the Know-Nothings had control of all the polling places. Every possible obstruction was thrown in the way of those voting who were not recognized as Know-Nothings. Large crowds were stationed at the entrance to shove back the Preston voters while side and back doors were provided for Marshall men." In the sixth ward "foreigners were driven from the polls and then beaten." One anti-know-nothing sympathizer says: "We saw two foreigners driven from the polls, forced to run a gauntlet, beat unmercifully, stoned and stabbed." (41)

Late in the afternoon in the sixth ward, an Irishman was walking in front of the courthouse when he was assaulted by a gang of men each armed with a small stick loaded with lead. He was knocked down and brutally beaten and one man actually thrust a big pitchfork into the body of the unfortunate Irishman. The crowd proceeded to march the staggering Irishman to the jail. His assailant marched in the crowd "with the pitchfork on his shoulder, blood dripping from its prongs." (42)

In the morning a general row took place on Shelby Street extending all the way from Main Street to Broadway. In this general encounter fourteen or fifteen men were shot, among them George Berg, a carpenter. About 11 a. m. on the corner of Shelby and Green Streets a severe encounter occurred involving native Americans, Irishmen, and Germans. Peace was partially restored

(40) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(41) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(42) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855 (This scene was also witnessed by James Speed, former mayor of Louisville, See James Speed, A Personality.)

in this section when a cannon, fully manned, and followed by fifty military men armed with muskets came up the street. Before order was established, however, the aroused mob had entered peaceful German houses and had done much damage. Many business houses, breweries, bakeries and groceries were destroyed. "A handful of foreigners made a determined stand against the cowardly rioters and who were far superior to them in numbers." (43)

One notable event of 'Bloody Monday' was the attack on several Catholic churches. For several days prior to election day, rumors that the Catholics had weapons concealed in the basement of their churches had caused considerable excitement among the Know-Nothings. On election day several Catholic Churches were entered and several were in danger of being destroyed by the Know-Nothings. One Catholic priest, pastor of a church on Thirteenth Street, had, prior to election day, asked that the Know-Nothings enter his church and see for themselves if any guns were concealed in the basement of his church. Some Americans did enter and found nothing. (44) This occurred before election day. Such rumors as mentioned above almost caused the destruction of a Catholic church located at Fifth and Green Streets and another church, located on Shelby Street, only escaped destruction by the timely intervention of Mayor Barbee and Marshall Kidd who "hearing of the contemplated attack, arrived on the spot in time. They entreated the rabble to disperse and were told that there were guns and ammunition and Germans in the church. Mayor Barbee and Marshall Kidd went in, examined the church and found nothing at all--so reported to the mob and entreated them to go home. Still refusing, Mayor Barbee threatened to call out the militia."

Then Mayor Barbee ordered the crowd, "under the command of Captain Rousseau," (46) to retire.

(43) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(44) Louisville Daily Journal, July 20, 1855

(45) Daily Democrat, August 8, 1855

(46) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

Before taking up the most horrible phase of this election day, the following excerpt from a letter from James A. Speed to a man named Thompson gives an interesting account of the day's activities. Mr. Speed, former mayor and an eye-witness to much violence of "Bloody Monday", went to vote before breakfast. At that time he said, "there was a good deal of noise and much yelling for Marshall". (47) After Mr. Speed had voted and had his breakfast, he went downtown to the courtroom where the votes were being taken and remained there until about nine or ten o'clock. The following quotation is from Mr. Speed's letter:

"Whilst there I heard the noise of several fights in the passageway and saw from the window Irishmen and Germans beaten and chased from the courthouse yard. When I came from the courtroom or the room in which the votes were taken in the passage, the crowd which had been in the passage had chased some foreigners into the yard east of the courthouse. I went to the east door of the courthouse and saw the crowd running down Sixth Street. From my office I saw many men, Irishmen and Germans, beaten in the courthouse before dinner. It was not fighting man to man, but as many as could would fall upon a single Irishman or German and beat him with sticks or short clubs. From the time I came out of the courthouse till dinner time the courthouse yard was occupied by a number of men and boys armed with short clubs shouting, 'Hurrah for Marshall! Hurrah for Sam!' They wore yellow tickets in their hats or on their breasts. Soon after I returned from dinner, about half-past two p. m. I saw a number of boys and men coming out of the courthouse armed with muskets and a great many armed with clubs. I inquired of Judge Badley what it meant; he replied that the Germans, two hundred strong and armed with double-barrelled shotguns, had taken possession of the polls in the first ward. I told him it was not so and could not be so. He replied with warmth showing that he believed it to be true.

"I was about my office till about 5 o'clock. Before I left the office or the neighborhood, I saw many Irishmen carried to jail covered with blood."

Mr. Speed then tells about how a crowd of Know-Nothing bullies pursued a little German up Jefferson Street.

"He fled into the courthouse yard and hid under the Know-Nothing speakers stand. They dragged him from the stand more dead than alive and carried him to jail on their shoulders.

"I know that the courthouse and courthouse yard was in the possession of

(47) James Speed; James Speed, A Personality, Louisville, Kentucky; Morton, 1914, page 39.

and under control of Know-Nothing bullies from nine o'clock till night or until the foreigners were so frightened they would not come about there.

"I saw no foreigner misbehave or say any insolent thing.

"While I was in the courtroom I heard that the Honorable Will P. Thomasson was struck when attempting to save an Irishman. I saw Mr. Thomasson soon after and saw the wound or bruise on his cheek. He told me that he had been struck for trying to keep the mob off of an Irishman they were pursuing." (48)

As was mentioned above, a great deal of the trouble on "Bloody Monday" was caused by mischief makers spreading rumors. "Reckless youths, who had been active in these things, spoke of their deeds in terms of levity that were shocking. They said that they did not know how many they had killed but that they had popped down every Irishman they saw. Multitudes of half-grown boys, rendered perfectly devilish with ungoverned passion and whiskey, filled the streets with yells and violence. Christian men and women alike, becoming demons, urged on the young men. Most painful sights were witnessed. Poor women were fleeing with their children and little mementos of home that were brought from the Fatherland. The most painful of all sights was the stars and stripes waved at the head of the sacrilegious mobites." (49)

The above description is vivid but is probably slightly overdrawn. Some of the words used are entirely too loose. However, we must accept the fact that in a measure, the Know-Nothings were really beyond control. (50) Most of the blame for the damage done by milling mobs must be placed on the so-called American party. (51)

The most horrible phase of "Bloody Monday" occurred late in the afternoon on the north side of Main Street, east of Eleventh. The beginning of this awful incident is vividly told in the reminiscences of Mr. A. J. Webster

(48) James Speed, A Personality, p. 40-42.

(49) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(50) Just as today communist-baiting can arouse certain elements so the anti-foreign and anti-Catholic movement appealed to the passions of people who neither understood the foreigners or the Catholics

(51) This is the opinion of Mr. Temple Bodley who recalled some of the incidents of "Bloody Monday" to the author.

of Boston, Massachusetts: (52)

"I was at Washington Engine House, a polling place, when a man came galloping up Jefferson Street whipping his horse with his hat and shouting at the top of his voice.....This was the news he carried: 'The First Engineer of the Henderson Packet, who had just completed his run, was on his way to his home walking quietly along Main Street opposite the "Quinn's Row" of buildings, when he was fired upon and mortally wounded.'" (It was afterward said this man was mistaken for another person.) The excitement was intense, nearly every man had a gun or some other weapon. The firebells rang and the Fire Department from all over the city sped to the scene. In the forces in 'Quinn's Row' had command of the situation. They completely covered the neighborhood of Twelfth and Main Streets and shot at any one who came within range. After a time a sharpshooter, armed with a long barrellled rifle, improvised some protection for himself, and from the corner of Twelfth and Main Streets shot and killed two of the alleged leaders of the forces in the 'Quinn Buildings'--who, so it developed, had there a secret society's club room and a well-stocked arsenal. Meanwhile some adventurous lads had crawled along close to the front of the buildings, broke open the doors and set fire to the lower floors. After the fire started, the fire department began to put it out, but the firemen were quickly told that 'if you attempt to throw a drop of water on these buildings, we will cut your hose into ribbons, but you may protect the surrounding buildings'.....This it did. With the setting on fire to all the lower floors, the upper ones became untenable, and a panic and break for the outlets ensued. This was resisted by the mob and a battle royal took place in which a number of men were killed, among them Father John Quinn."

The account given in the newspapers of the beginning of the riots on Main Street differs slightly from that of Mr. Webster. According to the Louisville Weekly Courier the trouble started when some Irishmen and Know-Nothings got into a fight in this neighborhood. The Louisville Daily Journal quotes a statement from a New York man who was in Louisville on election day and saw some Irishmen fire on two men near "Quinn's Row." (53)

The Irish were apparently well fortified in the houses along Main Street between Eleventh and Twelfth, and for a time resisted the efforts of the Americans to dislodge them. Numerous shots were fired by the foreigners from windows in some of the buildings, which killed or wounded Americans in

(52) Webster, A. J., Louisville in the 1850's,

Filson Club Historical Quarterly, Vol. 4, n. 3, p. 140.

(53) Louisville Daily Journal, August 15, 1855.

the street. This fact with the exaggerated report that guns and ammunition were hidden in 'Quinn's houses' excited to a frenzy a mob of Americans already crazed with similar excitement; shooting and bloodshed occurred on both sides at other points. (54)

As Mr. Webster recalled, the row of houses on Main Street between Eleventh and Twelfth were guarded by some Know-Nothings and "upon any of the tenants venturing to escape they were immediately shot down." (55) One man in Patrick Quinn's house tried to escape dressed as a woman, but he was caught and shot. Another man concealed himself in a mattress and had his wife carry him out that way. He was torn from the arms of his wife and shot. Still another man, wrapped in a blanket and leaning on the arm of his wife, was also deliberately shot by the rioters. (56)

"The acts of incendiarism do not compare in atrocity with the dreadful murders. Wretched inhabitants reached the street only to meet death in another form. A number were taken off badly wounded and others, shot to pieces, returned to the burning houses, preferring rather to be burned than to meet the infuriated mob." (57)

Patrick Quinn himself, a "brother of an Irish Catholic priest was shot and beaten and then burned".....(58)

Mr. Temple Bodley, mentioned above, recalls as a little boy being wakened at night and seeing the sky red from the burning of the houses in "Quinn's Row". In all, twelve houses were set fire to and burned on the north side of Main, east of Eleventh, two adjoining on Eleventh, and two on the south side of Main. (59) The mob, 400 strong, "having satisfied its appetite for blood,

(54) History of Ohio Falls Counties, p. 316

(55) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855

(56) Ibid.

(57) Ibid.

(58) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855

(59) History of Ohio Falls Counties, p. 316

repaired to Third Street and until midnight made demonstrations against the "Times" and the "Democrat". At one o'clock this morning a large fire was raging in the upper part of the city". (60) It was reported that Prentice's editorials had greatly aroused the Know-Nothing followers against the Times newspaper and they were bent on destroying it.

Some of the civic leaders in Louisville performed heroic service in trying to suppress the frenzied mobs. But for the intervention of Mayor Barbee and Bishop Spaulding, several Catholic churches would certainly have been damaged. The raid, last Monday night, on the Times newspaper building would have resulted in disaster but for the presence of Mr. George D. Prentice, who it is said, on that occasion made the only public address of his career. Marshall Kidd and a portion of the police, and the personal efforts of Honorable William P. Thomasson, Captain L. H. Rousseau, Colonel William Preston (the anti-Know-Nothing candidate for Congress), Joseph Burton and others, at different times and places, stopped the bloodshed. (61) Judge Bullock had been instrumental in having a number of Germans and Irishmen locked in jail for their own protection. Some Know-Nothing rioters heard of this and staged a demonstration in front of Judge Bullock's house. The judge, a small, pompous man came out and fearlessly faced the mob, denouncing them in scathing terms. They soon dispersed. (62) The work of Bishop Martin L. Spaulding of the Catholic church in quieting the disturbances and aiding the restoration of order to the city was particularly commendable. He had prevented a mob from attacking the church at Fifth and Green Streets. One historian has this to say regarding Bishop Spaulding's service:

"For several days after, fears of a renewal of the desperate

(60) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855

(61) History of Ohio Falls Counties, p. 316

(62) Related by Mr. Temple Bodley.

conflict and work of destruction, hung like a funeral pall over the city. A card from the Rt. Reverend Martin L. Spaulding and the steady efforts of many good citizens gradually restored a feeling of quiet and security". (63) The card of Reverend Spaulding read as follows: (64)

"Fellow-citizens; In the Louisville Journal of this morning I find the following passage: "We are not now prepared to say that they (assaults committed by foreigners).....were instigated by direct instructions of men with fiendish hearts who control in a great measure the passions and are able to dictate actions to the Germans and Irish, who made these attacks".

"If, as some have understood it--this message meant to refer to the Catholic Bishop and Priests of this city, I beg respectfully but most distinctly and earnestly to deny the truth of the injurious insinuation conveyed by its language, I have myself been until the last day or two confined to my room for two weeks by illness and I have the most positive information that none of the Catholic clergy of this city have had any agency in bringing about the recent lamentable outrages which no one deplors more than we do. Our voice has been uniformly for peace. We have not even in any way interfered in the last election being overwhelmed by laborious duties in a different sphere altogether.....

"To all whom the influence of my voice can in any way reach, I beg to say that I entreat them in the name of Jesus Christ, the God of Peace, to abstain from all violence, to remain quietly at home or attending to their business, to keep away from all excited assemblies and if they think they have been injured, to return good for evil and to pray for those who have wronged them. I appeal to them and to the world whether this has not been **always the tenor of my instructions to them, both public and private**, and also that of all the Catholic clergy.

"I have too high an opinion of my fellow-citizens of every class to believe for a moment that the threats which have been made by some will be carried out. I entreat all to pause and reflect, to commit no violence which they would regret in their cooler moments, to believe no idle rumors, and to cultivate that peace and love which are characteristic of the religion of Christ. We are to remain on earth but a few years; let us not add to the necessary ills of life those more awful ones of civil feud and bloody strife."

M. L. Spaulding.

The number of people killed and wounded in the riots of "Bloody Monday" is not definitely known. Estimates of the number killed ranged from twenty to one hundred. The most common figure given is twenty-two and that

(63) History of the Ohio Falls Counties, p. 316.

(64) Louisville Evening Bulletin, August 7, 1855.

is probably as nearly correct as we can get. Bishop Spaulding was quoted in the Catholic World that "nearly one hundred Irish and Germans were butchered or burnt and some twenty houses were burnt to the ground.....the city authorities looked calmly on and are now endeavoring to lay the blame on the Catholics."

(65) This account is undoubtedly exaggerated in every detail. No other report places the number killed as high as that and certainly the city authorities tried to stave off the excesses of the mobs. The mistake of the city authorities was not that they "looked calmly on" but that they had not made adequate preparation to conduct the election in an orderly manner.

Harper's Magazine carried the following account of "Bloody Monday" in the issue of September, 1855: (66)

"Very serious riots occurred in Louisville on the day of the election, August 6, 1855, between the Irish and the Americans, in which fire-arms were freely used on both sides, buildings were burned and some twenty persons lost their lives. The canvass in Kentucky has been conducted with great bitterness and animosity."

The Louisville Courier stated that twenty-two people were killed and many more wounded. "The Irish suffered the most injury." (67) Curiously enough those who were most mistreated, were put in jail. Father Able, a Catholic priest, was refused admittance to the jail when he called to administer spiritual blessing to those of his congregation who had suffered in the rioting of "Bloody Monday".

Several days later the editor of the Louisville Weekly Courier describes the scene of some of the most horrible events of "Bloody Monday". "Visiting yesterday the scenes of these outrages we were sickened at the ruin that had been wrought. The poor inhabitants were gathered around the remnants of their property, terrified at every sound lest it might be the signal of

(65) Catholic World, Vol. 57, July 1893, p. 514

(66) Harper's Magazine, September, 1855, Vol. XI, p. 544.

(67) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 18, 1855.

another attack." (68)

Dr. G. A. Ronald, clearing away the rubbish heap at the place where Patrick Quinn's property was destroyed, found a number of bones which he said were human bones. (69) Coroner W. Lee White said the "report that the remains of human bodies had been found among the ruins of Quinn's houses is without foundation. Up to last night, all the burnt bones found in the ruins would not fill the hollow of a man's hand and it is as likely that they were the bones of a dog or some other animal as those of a human being." (70)

As a result of the election the Know-Nothings were successful in the entire state. In Louisville, Morehead received 3,226 votes to 1890 votes for Clarke. In the entire Seventh District, Morehead had a majority of 2,616 over Beverly Clarke. Morehead and his state Know-Nothing ticket had a 4,500 majority. (71)

Humphrey Marshall, the Know-Nothing candidate for Congress, defeated Colonel William Preston by a vote of 3,276 to 1,450. The city of Louisville gave Marshall a majority of 1,664 and Jefferson County gave him a majority of 299. In the race for state senator the American candidate, Charles Ripley, won in the first six wards, and Colonel W. T. Haggin won in the other two city wards and in Jefferson County. For the House of Representatives J. G. Lyons, L. A. Whitely, E. S. Worthington, and W. S. Bodley, all Know-Nothing candidates, were victorious. (72) All over the state the Know-Nothings won an overwhelming vote.

Immediately following election day all the contending factions in

(68) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(69) Ibid., August 18, 1855.

(70) Louisville Evening Bulletin, August 9, 1855.

(71) Johnston, I. Stoddard, Memorial History of Louisville, from its first settlement to the year 1896, Chicago and New York; American Biographical Publishing Company, p. 131.

(72) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

Louisville began the task of condemning the barbarity of the opposition and vindicating their own position.

The Louisville Daily Journal accused the foreign element of having made extensive preparations for election day. In this fact the Know-Nothings saw that every evil deed committed by the foreign element was premeditated. "Germans and Irish prepared themselves with scores and hundreds of firearms not to make or resist aggression at the polls but to shoot down Americans from barricaded houses at points remote from the places of voting." (73) According to the American apologists, the situation that arose later in the day at Patrick Quinn's was also part of a well-planned plot to wipe out the American adherents. The Know-Nothing organ said, "We deeply regret Mr. Quinn's death, yet all the evidence proves that his blood is upon his own head." (74) The Democratic papers pointed out that Mr. Quinn had been a respected citizen of Louisville for about twenty years and had never been guilty of purposely stirring up trouble. "The riots did originate with the anti-American party and were as much preconceived and determined by that party as ever a battle was by a commanding general." (75) Referring again to the affair at "Quinn's Row" the Daily Journal says:

"We must beg to concentrate public attention upon the one great important fact.....that, up to the moment when the German shootings from the houses in the upper ward, the Irish shootings in the lower ward began, the streets were as quiet as any street in the city at this moment..... a destructive foreign fire was opened from the houses upon unoffending native citizens.....Any allegation that all this was done without premeditation..... is too absurd to impose upon any man worthy of notice."

The Louisville Daily Journal did not try to minimize the violence that attended the election, adding "we do not doubt, that , in some instances, the Americans there were wrong, yet a prominent gentle man of the Sixth ward informs us that the first violence was a blow given by an Irishman to an Amer-

(73) Louisville Daily Journal, August 15, 1855.

(74) Daily Democrat, August 9, 1855, quoting the Louisville Daily Journal.

(75) Louisville Daily Journal, August 15, 1855.

ican for quietly challenging his right to vote." In the opinion of the Know-Nothing newspapers, even admitting some guilt on the part of the American party, "such things could be no justification for the acts of the Germans and Irish for opening a general fire from their houses at places remote from the polls--their general and simultaneous use of firearms was one of the most dreadful outrages recorded in the history of the cities of the United States. Foreigners were influenced by demagogues into thinking they had an innate right to vote." (76)

"The native-born American citizens thought and felt that if any portion of the people legally entitled to vote should have to stand back and lose their suffrages for want of time, the foreign-born citizens should stand back rather than themselves.....Unquestionably they pressed forward early and vigorously to the polls, in order to be the first, if possible, and in this they were right." (77)

A Cincinnati newspaper, discussing the events of "Bloody Monday", said that foreigners had been gathering powder in the seventh ward preparatory to a new series of trouble with the Know-Nothings. Also, Colonel Preston was accused by this newspaper of being the leader of the anti-American forces against the Know-Nothings. The Louisville Weekly Courier denies this, saying, "the foreigners had not even made preparation to defend themselves in case of an attack". (78) On the polling day Colonel Preston saw how the election was going and advised his friends to leave the polls--"rather lose by default than provoke trouble". (79)

Catholic sympathizers were not slow in pointing out that the Know-Nothing mobsters had directly attacked Catholic church property. Bishop Spaulding formally demanded protection of Mayor Barbee and the bishop also defended the "sturdy Teutons who armed themselves against their assassins."

(76) Louisville Daily Journal, August 15, 1855.

(77) Ibid., August 16, 1855.

(78) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 18, 1855.

(79) Ibid., August 11, 1855.

In a letter to Arch-Bishop Kerrick, part of which has already been referred to, Bishop Spaulding said, "The atrocities of 'Bloody Monday' have never been equalled in this country. We have just passed through a region of terror, surpassed only by the Philadelphia riots. Nearly a hundred poor Irishmen and Germans have been butchered and burned and some twenty houses have been fired and burned to the ground. (80) According to the Catholics the city officials were sorry for their part in the Know-Nothing party. Prentice, Mayor Barbee, Humphrey Marshall, and Judge Caleb Logan expressed in Mr. Webb's (Catholic layman) presence, "their sincere regrets that they had ever had any connection with the movement". (81)

The Louisville Daily Journal was roundly accused as being principally responsible for the "Bloody Monday" riots. George D. Prentice, for his vitriolic utterances on his editorial pages, was held by many to be personally responsible for the outrages. The Daily Journal editorials was, in the eyes of George D. Prentice, ample proof of the guilt of the anti-Know-Nothing forces. (82) Also many out-of-state Democratic organizations aver that the real trouble was started by the anti-Know-Nothings. (83) Referring to the actual casualties, the Louisville Daily Journal makes the extreme statement that "in the upper part of the city at least twenty men and one boy were shot in the peaceful streets and were weltering in their blood before a solitary weapon was raised against the perpetrators". To the comment made by the Daily Democrat bemoaning the loss of blood by foreigners the Daily Journal observes that the Democrat does not bother to "explain why he has not a word to say about native--about the blood of between twenty and thirty natives that stained our streets before a

(80) Webb, Benjamin J., Centenary of Catholicity in Kentucky, Louisville Robers, 1844, p. 484

(81) Catholic World, Vol. 57, July 1893, p. 515

(82) Louisville Daily Journal, August 16, 1855

(83) Ibid., August 17, 1855

drop of Irish or German blood began to flow." (84)

An intelligent Catholic Layman of Louisville, Benjamin Webb, with whom George D. Prentice had many editorial clashes, said this of Prentice:

".....formerly a votary of the gentlest of the muses, he has turned his pipe to another lay: Arma virumque cano--war is now his theme; and the object of his highest ambition is to break a lance with the 'Papal Dragon'". (85)

The Louisville Times in reply to Prentice's appeal for Know-Nothing subscriptions said, "Does not he consider himself sufficiently paid for having scores of Germans and Irish murdered." (86)

The Louisville Weekly Courier blamed the Journal for the worst excesses of "Bloody Monday" because of "incendiary articles". "Every action of the Know-Nothings tended to produce the damnable outrage. They prevented the allocation of additional voting places, determined that a full vote should not be polled, and had Know-Nothings appointed almost exclusively as election officials." (87)

Ben Webb further states that George D. Prentice's action did not reflect his personal hatred or bigotry, but that Prentice was "governed more by policy than by principle". It was through selfish interest and the persuasion of friends that he was induced to join hands with political malcontents. He had sold himself to his party for defensive as well as aggressive action..... "From this time began the decadence of his fame." (88)

Benjamin Webb writing in his book, Centenary of Catholicity, says, "a report in the Louisville Daily Journal, August 6, that the killing, maiming and burning of the day before had been the direct result of assaults made upon peaceable citizens by the foreign-born elements of the population, and intimating, too, that these assaults were instigated by the Catholic clergy of the

(84) Ibid., August 15, 1855.

(85) Catholic World, Vol. 57, 1893, p. 517.

(86) Louisville Times, January 23, 1856.

(87) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 11, 1855.

(88) Webb, Catholicity, pp. 483,-485.

city." (89)

"George D. Prentice was most responsible for "Bloody Monday".

There is scarcely a doubt that through selfish interests and the persuasion of party friends that he was induced to join hands with the malcontent politicians of the day. He excused the mob as far as he could and he sought, as Bishop Spaulding truly says, to cast upon the victims of its fury all responsibility for the events." (90)

The Louisville Weekly Courier had been rather vigorous in its attack on the Louisville Daily Journal although it pretended to be a neutral, non-partisan newspaper. In December, 1855, when the controversy over "Bloody Monday" was still being hotly discussed that newspaper advocated a sudden cessation of all discussion and ranting about the unfortunate August election. Probably the effect of the riots on Louisville's prosperity was real. At any rate the Louisville Weekly Courier maintained that a fair and peaceful election would have easily assured Preston a majority of "at least 600". (92)

The fact that even the police force on election day were Know-Nothing sympathizers is cited by the Weekly Courier in support of their contention that the foreigners in Louisville were not given a fair chance to vote. (93) The "election tables were published only as a matter of form. The election was really no election at all. A nice sense of honor would prompt a gentleman to decline receiving certificates of election won under such circumstances." (94)

The Courier did not blame all the Know-Nothings for Monday's trouble because they knew many of the Know-Nothings were the most prominent men in the city. Many of the ruffians were imported. (95) The Louisville

(89) Webb, Catholicity, p. 485.

(90) Ibid.

(91) Louisville Weekly Courier, December 15, 1855.

(92) Ibid., August 11, 1855.

(93) Ibid., August 18, 1855.

(94) Ibid., August 11, 1855

(95) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 18, 1855.

Weekly Courier was prevented from revealing facts of riots Monday because of threats of Know-Nothings against property and employees of the Louisville Weekly Courier. According to the Louisville Weekly Courier no "greater curse has certainly ever fallen upon our fair city than thus to be placed under the yoke of Know-Nothingism. As a national party Know-Nothingism is already defunct. It is a consolatory reflection to know that these unparalleled outrages in Louisville are the last efforts of a dying faction--the spasms of its last agencies." (96)

The out-of-town press was very forceful in its condemnation of the laxity of city officials in regulating the election on Monday, August the sixth. The New York Courier and Enquirer asked, "where was the military? It had been distinctly foreseen that there was danger of public disturbance on election day." (97) There was "no precaution taken by municipal authorities against the apprehended evil. No riot has occurred for years that occasioned the destruction of such an amount of life." It seemed incredible to New York papers that the city authorities had been incapable of doing something about the riot. Responsibility is resting on Louisville officials who failed "most discreditably in their official duty." (98) Regardless of which side should ultimately be blamed for the riots of "Bloody Monday" "the verdict concerning the municipal authorities of Louisville is already made up." (99)

The conclusions reached by the New York Tribune probably gives a more accurate conclusion than can be found in any newspaper--certainly more reliable than any Louisville newspaper account. Conclusions contained in that paper follow:

"1. The city administration was strongly Know-Nothing.

(96) Ibid., August 11, 1855.

(97) Ibid., August 18, 1855.

(98) Ibid.,

(99) Louisville Daily Democrat, August 14, 1855.

2. More polling places were needed.
3. The anti-Know-Nothing appeal for more voting places was ignored.
4. Polls were surrounded by members of the Know-Nothing party, the "midnight order".
5. The adopted citizens commenced the rioting but were justified.
6. The Catholic Cathedral was saved by the mayor. The attack was made because of rumor that arms were hidden there." (100)

Mayor Barbee made this statement in regard to the efforts made to preserve peace on "Bloody Monday", "My efforts, aided by the police, were wholly unavailing". (101) The Common Council, at the Mayor's suggestion, passed a resolution recommending a thorough investigation of the rioting. Not only was there an investigation to deal with the responsibility for the riot but also an investigation to report on the destitution in several sections of the city. Any number of people, pretending destitution, went about the city begging alms. "Colonel Duerson of the Alms House is securing a list of sufferers from the riots." (102) Yet, no one denied that in many cases there was real destitution and in order to meet this emergency the Common Council passed the following resolution;

"Whereas, a portion for our foreign-born population, by deeds of violence and bloodshed, provoking our native-born citizens to measures of retaliation, has brought upon many families of both classes destitution strongly appealing to public sympathy; Therefore, Resolved by the General Council of the City of Louisville that His Honor, the Mayor be and is hereby requested to inquire into the conditions and necessities of said families and report to the General Council as soon as he conveniently can, what sum is requisite to provide them with all proper necessities for the time being." (103)

In pursuance of the recommendation to investigate responsibility for the rioting a committee, headed by a Mr. Gillis submitted a report which was a vindication of the Know-Nothing party. According to this report all the

(100) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 25, 1855.

(101) ibid.

(102) Louisville Daily Journal, August 25, 1855.

(103) Joint Resolutions, General Council of the City of Louisville, August 11, 1855.

polling places on election day were quiet "as seen by a portion of your committee" and the "foreign population commenced the difficulties in every instance. All the disturbances originated at a distance from the polls." (IO4)

Gillis' report follows:

"The property known as 'Quinn's Row' was a complete armory. Powder and arms had been stored there for three weeks before election. Quinn asserted that said guns would be used against Americans." (IO5)

To substantiate this statement Gillis referred to David L. Beatty, member of the Council, and to George W. Griffey, street inspector for the western district, both of whom corroborated Gillis' statement.

"By these priest-ridden foreign hirelings and from the walls of these desecrated habitations ...Americans were shot down without provocation. On Shelby Street houses occupied by foreigners were mostly supplied with guns . . Your committee concludes that ~~for~~ the foreign-born population, aided by would-be Americans planned and set in motion the machinery from which the disturbances originated." (IO6)

The Gillis' committee asked that this report be adopted by the Common Council and this was done by a unanimous vote. (IO7) By mistake the report made by Gillis' committee was placed before the Board of Alderman and they immediately tabled it. The Daily Democrat commends the alderman on their "sensible gesture". (IO8) With reference to the report the Daily Democrat pointed out the inconsistency in the admission by the Louisville Daily Journal that disturbances had occurred at some of the polls and the Gillis report that all had been quiet at the polls. (IO9)

With reference to the prevalent destitution in Louisville following "Bloody Monday" the following resolution was passed by the General Council: (II0)

" It is resolved by the General Council of the City of Louis-

(IO4) Louisville Weekly Courier, August 25, 1855

(IO5) Ibid.

(IO6) Ibid.

(IO7) Ibid.

(IO8) Louisville Daily Democrat, August 23, 1855

(IO9) Ibid.

(II0) Joint Resolution, General Council of the City of Louisville, August 18, 1855.

ville that the sum of five hundred (\$500.00) dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated for the relief of destitute persons who have suffered by the riots in the first and eighth wards, the same to be placed in the hands of John Parbee, Mayor, for distribution and the Auditor is hereby directed to draw a warrant on the Treasury in favor of the Mayor and charge to incidental expenses and the Mayor shall report how the sum is disbursed." (111)

The General Council, meeting in session August 25, 1855, passed two interesting resolutions, one referring to the fire that had destroyed "Quinn's property and the other dealing with the salaries of the special policemen. Excerpts from these resolutions follow. (112)

1. "Resolved by the General Council of the City of Louisville that the following sums be allowed the following persons for services rendered at the fire at Main and Eleventh Streets:

William Winters ----	\$ 5.75
Matt Little -----	3.75
Henry Duncan -----	3.75
Smith -----	3.75
Rogers -----	3.75
William Badgett ----	6.00
Amos Griffin -----	5.00
Isaac Batman -----	5.00

\$37.00

Approved August 25, 1855

2. "Resolved that the sum of \$109 dollars be and the same is hereby appropriated in the hands of his Honor the Mayor to be by him paid to the persons named in his communication and charge the same to incidental expenses."

Undoubtedly the excesses of "Bloody Monday" had a retarding effect on Louisville. At the time of the unfortunate election Louisville was growing rapidly and was especially proud of the industrial progress of the city. Although many considered the national strength of the Know-Nothing party to be in decline, the election in Louisville caused foreigners to look with

(111) Ibid.

(112) Ibid., August 23, 1855.

disfavor on Kentucky as a place to make a home. "The only effect of the temporary triumph was to give Kentucky a bad name among the immigrants from which it never recovered as shown by the fact that in her population of two millions she has but sixty thousand persons of foreign birth within her borders." (113) The last census showed a population of 1,858,635 of which only 59,356 were of foreign birth. (114)

Bishop Spaulding, making a missionary trip through his diocese following "Bloody Monday" said, "the recent Know-Nothing excitement and crusade against the Catholics have rendered the latter more zealous in the faith..... persecution benefits its victims." (115)

Bishop Spaulding gave a very striking story of the effect of the August election on Louisville but it is probably overdrawn. He said, "In Louisville there was no market for real estate; no new enterprises were started; grass grew in the streets and hogs sunned themselves in the filth of the gutters; and this stagnation did not pass away until the awful storm of Civil war had passed over it and purified the air." (116) "Then for days together one might walk the streets without meeting a single Irish or German citizen. Hundred of them, as soon as they could possibly arrange their affairs, moved away from the city altogether." (117)

Of course for sometime following the August election any slowing up of Louisville's development was most certainly blamed on that election. The anti-Know-Nothing journals accounted for the small number of foreigners in that way. However, it is gross oversimplification to attribute the general business condition of Louisville to "Bloody Monday" troubles. For example,

(113) Memorial History of Louisville, p. 133

(114) Ibid., p. 100.

(115) Louisville Weekly Courier, November 31, 1855.

(116) Catholic World, July 1893, p. 520.

(117) Webb, Catholicity, p. 485.

one anti-Know-Nothing organ attributes the fact that Louisville municipal bonds sold twenty-eight cents less in 1857 than 1855 to the election of August 6, 1855. This obviously untrue. What is true is that the constant, irritating agitation carried on by the Louisville newspapers before and after that election undoubtedly had an unsettling effect on Louisville industrial life. Louisville business men were not slow to appreciate this fact and a committee was named from among the business men of Louisville to forward the following resolution to the editors of the city: (118)

"Resolved: That the public prints of our city be requested to discontinue the discussion of the prosperity of this city, so far as the said prints may have connected the same with issues of political parties."

Samuel Casseday, Chairman
Thomas F. Hughes, Secretary

A petition presented by S. S. Nicholas, R. J. Ward, James Rudd, and others requested that the city of Louisville bear the expenses arising as a result of the damage to private property in the riots of "Bloody Monday". "Legal liability of the city was conclusively negative by the decision of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky. The city has no power to appropriate money from the regular funds and no other funds are available." (119) It was perhaps unwise to pay the money even if the city could have done so. "If the precedent be established that they can do whatever their evil passions prompt them to do, and then receive compensations from all losses, they will be freed from a very necessary and wholesome restraint." (120)

An Act of the General Assembly, passed February 29, 1860, authorizing the levy of a tax sufficient to pay, with interest from the date of the

(118) Daily Louisville Times, April 24, 1856

(119) Louisville Evening Bulletin, August 27, 1855.

(120) Ibid.

riot, such amounts as shall be ascertained and adjudged to be due by the Chancellor of the Louisville Chancery Court. (121)

Thus ended one of the most disgraceful episodes ever to occur in an American city. "Bloody Monday" had claimed the attention of the whole country and the effect had been to cause people to regard with horror the ugly portent of racial warfare and religious intolerance. However, the Know-Nothing organization was fast losing its appeal to the country and the slavery issue was further dividing the party into two camps. A Know-Nothing meeting in Louisville, September 1, 1855, frankly admitted that some of the national platform features were clearly objectionable. (122) Many northern states had repudiated the national platform and dissolved their Know-Nothing Councils. They were fast falling into line with the powerful Republican Party movement.

Kentucky Know-Nothing members, although they were fast deserting the "sinking ship", were not as easily won to the Republican Party. Particularly in Louisville the Know-Nothing party continued strong for at least two years and then combined with the Constitutional Union party in 1860. (123)

(121) Johnson, Memorial History of Louisville, p. 100v Vol. I and Journal of House of Representatives, Dec. 5, 1859, March 5, 1860, Kentucky Yeomans Office, 1859.

(122) Louisville Weekly Courier, September, 1855.

(123) Connelly & Coulter, page 852.

CHAPTER V

THE KNOW-NOTHINGS AND THE ELECTION OF 1856

CHAPTER V

The Know-Nothings, and the Election of 1856

The Act of the General Assembly in righting the wrongs that had been perpetrated on "Bloody Monday" by no means ended the controversy between the Know-Nothings and the Democratic party. Although the national Know-Nothing organization began to decline in 1856 due to its inability to dodge the slavery question, the political controversy in Louisville ran strong for several years.

The organization of the Know-Nothing party in Kentucky was of "little vitality". (1) The American party in Kentucky was, like the organization in most of the country, in grave danger of falling apart. An adjunct to the Know-Nothing party, the Temperance Party, had fallen to pieces. The American party in March 1856 issued a circular to its Kentucky constituents in an effort to "arouse once more that fervent zeal and patriotic spirit that animated you on the 6th of August last when you won a most brilliant victory." (2)

The effort to "arouse once more" the zeal of "Bloody Monday" may be taken as an indication that the Know-Nothing party was losing its popularity; that is certainly the fact, at any rate.

Prior to this significant circularization the Know-Nothing National Convention had met in Philadelphia, February, 1856, and had further disintegrated as a real national party. The platform for the convention had already been drawn up by the National Council and, significantly enough, this platform had repealed the extremely pro-Southern section twelve regarding slavery and, in its place, had adopted a new one which avoided an explicit expression of the

(1) Connelly & Coulter, p. 848.

(2) Ibid.

party's views on slavery but which was generally favorable to the South. The section evaded the issue by declaring laws constitutionally enacted must be enforced until regularly repealed and adjudged null and void. (3) Defeated on a motion to deny the binding authority of this platform many northern delegates withdrew. The remaining delegates nominated Millard Fillmore and Andrew Jackson Donelson for president and vice-president, respectively. As the Daily Louisville Times aptly put the situation, "the mountain had labored and brought forth a mouse". (4)

One significant provision of the party platform refers to the loss of secrecy:

"Each state council shall have authority to amend their several constitutions so as to abolish the several degrees and institute a pledge of honor instead of the other obligations,,,a free and open discussion of all the political principles embraced in our platform."

The attempt of the Know-Nothing convention to appease the North by eliminating the controversial Section 12 and at the same time retain, by insinuation, the allegiance of the South, could not be done. Likewise, by trying to retain a firm hold in sections that were strongly Catholic while they were also trying to keep the anti-Catholics from breaking away from the party was also attempting the well-nigh impossible. The platform tried to appease Catholics and the anti-Catholics, slavery sympathizers, and slavery opponents. This could not be done.

In April, 1856, the regular election for Common Councilmen and Aldermen took place. The Democrats were not very hopeful of successfully opposing the Know-Nothings as a regular party organization. Consequently, in an effort to unite various factions in the common cause of defeating the Know-

(3) Cole, A.C., Whig Party in South, p. 322

(4) Daily Louisville Times, February 26, 1956

Nothing ticket they asked the question, "Cannot an Independent ticket be put in nomination against them (Know-Nothings)? Those having at heart the success of the Public Schools--the efficient organization of our Fire Companies--and those opposed to fools and fanatics, might present and elect a good ticket." (5) This may have been one hope of the Democratic party but the prevailing thought of the anti-Know-Nothing forces was one of utter hopelessness. The changes, according to the Democratic organ, that had taken place in Louisville were tremendous and the Daily Louisville Times wrote that "we have lost one-third of our trade and instead of increasing our population, thousands of industrious citizens have been driven out to seek homes elsewhere. From all indications we can see but little hope for a change." (6) This attitude seemed to be rather general in the Democratic party. They considered that they had still less opportunity of thwarting the Know-Nothings than in August, 1855, because the "outrages then committed upon foreign-born Democrats and still greater crime of the 6th of the following August will prevent a large majority of them from again endeavoring to exercise the right of suffrage." (7)

The Know-Nothing party presented nominees in all wards and with few exceptions these nominees were unopposed. There were "but few announcements of opposition to the Know-Nothing ticket. In the seventh ward Mr. A. T. Durrett, Old Line Whig, has announced for the Common Council and in the sixth ward Joe Metcalfe was called on by many voters to become a candidate for the Common Council." (8)

The attitude of the Democratic press may be ascertained by the following statement: "We suppose a worse nomination was never made than this ticket presented by the Know-Nothings and we know of no hope for the city if

(5) Ibid., March 28, 1856

(6) Daily Louisville Times, March 20, 1856.

(7) Ibid.

(8) Ibid., March 18, 1856

it should be elected, short of the interposition of Divine Providence." (9)

The election, which took place on Saturday, April 5, 1856, resulted in "favor of the Know-Nothings as matter of course. Adopted citizens would not go to the polls as they had not made their wills and did not desire to die." (10) "Of the 3000 Democratic votes in Louisville only 600 of them were allowed to vote." (11) For several days the Louisville Daily Journal called on the Know-Nothings to rally in full strength at the polls; the interest of the Know-Nothings ^{was} aroused by saying that the Democrats had secretly armed and their real strength was consequently unknown. "On the evening before election day a number of foreigners stopped work, took their wives and children and went to the country. 'Americans' went to Portland where the Democrats were leading and offered to bet that no another Democratic vote would be taken." (12)

Before the election of August 4, 1856, for the offices of Chancellor and Commonwealth's Attorney, an effort was made to put the Louisville election proceeedure on a dignified respectable basis. On May 27, 1856 an ordinance was introduced by Alderman Harris before the Board containing the following sections:

(13)

Section 1: "At all state and numicipal elections held in the city of Louisville, it shall be the duty of the chief of police to station at each voting place a sufficient police force to keep the polls clear, to suppress all riots and disturbances.

Section 2: After a person has voted he must retire sixty feet. Failure to do this will result in a \$50. Fine.

Section 3: It is the duty of the city to prevent obstruction of the voting privilege.

Section 4: Citizens may be enrolled by the Chief of Police to supplement the regular police. They shall be paid as the regular police from a special appropriation made after election.

(9) Ibid.

(10) Daily Louisville Times, April 11, 1856 quoted from Bardstown Gazette.

(11) Daily Louisville Times, April 12, 1856.

(12) Ibid.

(13) Ibid., May 29, 1856

Section 5: Dismissal for failure to perform above duties. This applies to all, from the Chief of Police on down.

Section 6: The mayor shall enforce the Ordinance and have the same printed in daily city papers one month preceding the next August elections."

The Board of Aldermen unanimously passed this ordinance which would have made a very needed improvement in the election procedure. The Common Council, however, rejected the Ordinance on the ground that the provisions were warlike in character. The Common Council referred to Louisville as the "halcyon of peace". With reference to this phrase the Daily Louisville Times said, "The halcyon, our readers will remember, was a fabulous bird in ancient myth, and this one is equally so." (14)

The election for county offices August 4, 1856, was rather colorless. The Democrats did not nominate any candidates for office, their strategy being to let the Know-Nothings ruin themselves in office and then the Democrats could win without much trouble.

The Know-Nothing candidates for the major offices were Caleb W. Logan for chancellor, William F. Bullock for Circuit Judge, and E. W. Craig, an "intense American", for Commonwealth's attorney. Mr. Henry Firtle, who had been Chancellor for several terms had been urged to become the Know-Nothing candidate for the office of chancellor. The Know-Nothing national president, E. F. Bartlett, a Kentuckian, came to Louisville and tried to get Firtle to run on the Know-Nothing ticket but Firtle eventually ran as an Independent.

Although no violence was expected Mayor Barbee issued the following proclamation: (15)

(14) Daily Louisville Times, June 13, 1856

(15) Daily Democrat, August 4, 1856.

Mayor's Office
 July 28, 1856
 Louisville, Kentucky

To the Citizens of Louisville:

"As fears exist in the minds of many good citizens that the approaching elections in August and November may be the occasion of riotous and disorderly conduct in the city, growing out of an excited state of party feeling, I have thought it proper... to issue special instructions to the Chief of Police to prevent a breach of the peace.

I now appeal to all good citizens to aid the officers in the discharge of their duties.....and it is enjoined upon all parents and guardians to keep their children from the polls or places of voting...

The peace of the city must be preserved; law and order must prevail. To secure this, provision has been made, and force will be resorted to, if milder means will not suffice."

John Barbee, Mayor

The mayor also requested "owners of coffee houses to close their houses and not vend spiritous liquors on election day,"and also to keep away from the polls. Last year buckets of whiskey were in the hands of Americans at the polls to quench Sam's thirst." (16)

The election actually was conducted with very few disturbances. The Democrat says "the Know-Nothings held a very solemn election yesterday. We heard of no disturbances at the polls. The Democratic party had no nominees and there were only three or four independent candidates. (17) A number of our foreign-born citizens left the city in the morning, apprehensive of mob violence, in spite of all assurance. Many native-born voters refused to vote." (18)

The Democrats, meeting in convention in Cincinnati, the first week in June, nominated Buchanan for President. The Democrats followed two

(16) Daily Democrat, Tuesday, August 5, 1856

(17) Louisville Daily Courier, August 4, 1856.

(18) Daily Democrat, August 5, 1856.

main arguments in the campaign. First, the Democratic party claimed to be the union party. This was probably true at this time because certainly the Know-Nothing party was divided nationally and the Republican party, which had full slate of candidates in Kentucky in the election, never claimed to be a union party. The people of Kentucky, probably more politically uncertain than at any time since the days of Jackson and Clay, only knew that they were still for the preservation of the Union. The Democrats tried to win Know-Nothing support by showing that "what was once the old conservative Whig party, has passed from hands of moderate, conservative men, and is now being hurried forward in a mad career of folly by the crude and crazed theories of bigots, zealots and demagogues." (19) In an editorial of February 21, 1856, the Daily Louisville Times endeavored to show that the northern Democrats and the Southern Democrats had always acted together on vital issues. "While this was becoming less true since the passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, the dissension in the American party, closely following the trend that spelled doom to the Whig party, could scarcely give that party the right to the name "national party." (20)

The second argument advanced by the Democrats, never successfully met by the Know-Nothings, was that a vote for Fillmore was in reality a vote for Fremont, the Republican candidate. There was danger that a division of the vote in the South would make the election of Fremont a real possibility. In face of this danger many Know-Nothings and old line Whigs deserted to Buchanan's cause. The Daily Democrat said, "Friends of the South are jeopardizing the position of the South by voting for Fillmore". (21)

The following editorial seems to be near the truth: "The Black

(19) Daily Louisville Times, February 2, 1856.

(20) Cole, A. C. Whig Party in the South, pp. 322, 323.

(21) Daily Louisville Times, June 11, 1856.

Republicans may cry out against it--the Know-Nothings may depreciate it--but the action of the Democratic Convention in Cincinnati has insured the perpetuity of the Union." (22)

Several other facts gave the Democrats prestige: one, Buchanan was a Jacksonian Democrat; Breckenridge, Democratic candidate for vice-president was a native of Kentucky; then the atrocities of "Bloody Monday" had damaged the Know-Nothing cause in Kentucky. (23)

The certainty that had prevailed in Louisville during the spring and August elections of 1856 vanished as the presidential race drew near. Once again the Democrats, feeling that in this election the Know-Nothings were going to be defeated, and the Know-Nothings, rather desperate, prepared for election day in much the same manner that they had in the summer of 1855. Ill-feeling in Louisville was a continued thing. The Daily Democrat reports two cases of Germans in Police Court who were arrested for being in a bad neighborhood Tuesday, October 21, 1856, and for being Germans. "They had no business for being guilty of either offense.....their dialect convicted them of the crime of German nativity." (24)

of

The Mayor/Louisville issued the following proclamation on November 3, 1856:

"In order to prevent riotous and disorderly conduct in the city at the approaching presidential election, I have thought it proper, in the discharge of my duties as Mayor, to issue special instructions to the Chief of Police whereby peace and good order may be preserved in the city; and I do now appeal to all good citizens to aid the officers in the discharge of their duties.....It is likewise enjoin-upon all parents and guardians to keep their children away from the places of voting.....The peace of the city must be preserved. Law and order must prevail. To secure this, provision has been made and force will be resorted to if milder means will not suffice." (25)

(22) Daily Democrat, October 23, 1856.

(23) Mississippi Valley Historical Review, Vol. IV, No. 1, p. 54.

(24) Louisville Daily Democrat, October 23, 1856

(25) Louisville Evening Bulletin, November 3, 1856.

The leading men of the city, clergymen and laymen alike, urged a peaceful election. Bishop Spaulding, at the request of the Mayor, issued a request for peace to his communicants.

"In the name of Jesus Christ, the Prince of Peace we invoke peace to still the angry waves of human passion.....

"While it is clearly not our province to interfere with the political discussions of the day, it is surely competent for us, under present circumstances, earnestly to exhort all our fellow-citizens to claim nothing which the laws do not secure to them, to exercise even their undoubted civil rights with due forbearance and moderation, scrupulously respecting the feelings and rights of others....." (26)

A number of leading citizens offered their services as volunteer policemen. They were trying to avoid a repetition of the incidents of "Bloody Monday" by having an adequate police force to preserve law and order. There were also assurances from city officials and leading citizens to foreigners urging them to remain in the city for the election. Naturally, most assurances of this nature come from Democrats. A vote of six thousand was expected. The Daily Democrat noted "that the mayor has shown a laudable anxiety on this subject, and that there is prospect of concern to maintain law and order that will be effectual". (27)

Louisville business men were also concerned that the election give public assurance of the stability of law and order in Louisville. If a small vote should be polled business men felt that the idea would be held that intimidation and violence had kept many away from the polls. (28)

Although the Know-Nothings won in the election it passed off quietly. There were a few incidents of intimidations, (29) but on the whole the Democrats were satisfied that the election, under careful official supervision, had been fair. In fact the Democrats claimed a moral victory since for

(26) Louisville Evening Bulletin, November 3, 1856.

(27) The Daily Democrat.

(28) Louisville Courier, November 3, 1856.

(29) Ibid., November 5, 1856.

"all the efficient and systematic efforts they(Know-Nothings) have actually lost in the city as compared with Morehead's vote." (30)

Fillmore polled 3,328 votes and Buchanan, 2,016, giving Fillmore a majority of 1,812. Considering that only 6,000 had been expected to vote the election was a success and apparently the Democrats and the foreigners had been allowed to vote.

The Daily Democrat said, "We congratulate Louisville that she has presented herself with a much better face than it was apprehended she would, No funerals followed on the election this city. The result has raised the character of Louisville in the public's estimation." (31)

The total national vote for the candidates was as follows: Buchanan received 1,838,169; Fremont, 1,341,264; and Fillmore, 874,534. Fillmore had forty-four(44%) per cent of the Southern vote and thirteen (13%) per cent of the northern vote. Buchanan carried Kentucky by a majority of 6,118 over Fillmore, the first time that Kentucky had gone Democratic in a presidential election since 1828, (32)

Some historians take the election of 1856 as the point where the Know-No_othing party in Kentucky began its definite decline. "From now on Kentucky was a Democratic state, with varying degrees of insistence on the principles of national democracy." (32) The Know-Nothings blamed their defeat on the elevation of the slavery question. (33)

(30) Ibid.

(31) Louisville Daily Democrat, November 10, 1856

(32) Connelly & Coulter, page 848.

(33) Ibid., p. 849.

CHAPTER VI

THE PERSISTENCE OF KNOW-NOTHINGS IN LOUISVILLE

CHAPTER VI

The Persistence of the Know-Nothing Party in Louisville

We have noted that in the election of 1856 the state of Kentucky as a whole cast its vote for Buchanan while the city of Louisville cast its vote for Fillmore. As long as the Know-Nothing party retained its familiar name, they were successful in Louisville. In the nation various factors were spelling doom for the Know-Nothings; the rise of the Republican party, the inefficient leadership in the party, the barrenness of Know-Nothing legislative-ness, the prominence of the slavery issue, and the need for more labor in a rapidly expanding country.

The Know-Nothing party in Kentucky had approved the southern platform of the party in 1855. With the breakup of the party in other parts of the United States for the above named reasons, the Kentucky Know-Nothings, zealous for the Union, found that the preservation of the Union seemed less likely under Know-Nothing standards than under Democratic. Hence, many "Old-Line " Whigs who had voted with the Know-Nothing party in 1855 now joined forces with the Democrats.

In Louisville for at least three years following the havoc of "Bloody Monday", August 6, 1855, the Know-Nothing party continued to control the local political situation. Even with the rest of the state in the Democrats' column, which it was from "Bloody Monday" on, the Louisville Know-Nothings were strong. One must not suppose that this was because the people of Louisville were more interested in the preservation of the Union than other people in Kentucky, for this is not true. As noted above, Louisville was one of the Southern centers of Know-Nothingism. Probably the persistence of Know-Nothingism in Louisville was simply the normal political development. Because of the

more intense nativist feeling in Louisville than in any other parts of the state, and because of the difference in social and economic problems one might rightly suppose that Know-Nothingism would last longer in Louisville than in any other part of Kentucky. Strength is given to this view by the knowledge that Know-Nothingism persisted longest in those centers where nativist feeling was keenest. New Orleans might be cited as an example of this.

Two very important events occurred in Louisville in 1857 that deserve comment: first, the meeting of the national Know-Nothing Convention in Louisville in June, 1857; and second, the August elections of that year.

Prior to the meeting of the national convention, Louisville had elected a new mayor, April 4, 1857. In this election very little violence occurred because the Democratic party refused to nominate candidates, well knowing that the Know-Nothings were too powerful to be defeated. According to the Democratic organ "the Democracy preferred that the election go by default rather than do aught to disturb the peace and harmony of our people. Happily.... the election day passed quietly." (1) Organs of both parties agreed that the total vote was very small; the democrats contended that since only about one-fifth of the eligible vote was cast the election was unfair, (2) and the Know-Nothings, while admitting that only one-fourth of the eligible vote was cast, attributed the small vote to the efficiency of the Know-Nothings and the inefficient organization of the Democrats. (3) The Louisville Daily Journal regarded the election as vindication of the Know-Nothings for the "Bloody Monday" riots. The election was according to the Know-Nothing organ, "signal evidence of the entire confidence of our citizens of the candidates selected by the American party". (4)

(1) Louisville Daily Democrat, April 5, 1857.

(2) Ibid.

(3) Louisville Daily Journal, April 7, 1857

(4) Ibid., April 6, 1857.

"The whole American ticket was elected by a five-sixth (5/6) majority of all the votes cast." (5) In the race for mayor William S. Pilcher, the Know-Nothing candidate was opposed by two independent candidates, Captain John M. Martin and a man named Osborne. Pilcher got 1,410 votes, Martin 224, and Osborne 15.

In this election there is again evidence that the Democrats were poorly organized for local elections. This dislike for nominations for local elections as somehow denying certain American liberties is voiced in a Democratic editorial in March, 1857, which criticises the Know-Nothing method of "selecting nominees in a very small party meeting" and thus, in some way, violating American liberties. The Know-Nothings maintained that the "American Party is not controlled by party leaders. It is a party of the people..... every American.....has an opportunity to deposit his ballot and express his preference." (6)

On June 2, 1857, the national convention of the Know-Nothing party met in Louisville. According to the Democratic press the convention was very unimpressive. Meeting in a hall with a capacity of 1200 "the Know-Nothing convention consisted of fifty-five members, representing 'Sam' from thirteen states". (7)

In this national convention the party secrecy was finally abolished. The fourteenth resolution of the convention put the Know-Nothing party on record as advocating "free and open discussion of all political principles embraced in our platform". (8) This question caused considerable discussion, some members opposing violently the abolition of party secrecy.

(5) Louisville Daily Journal, April 6, 1857

(6) Louisville Daily Journal, March 23, 1857

(7) Daily Democrat, June 6, 1857

(8) Ibid., June 10, 1857

To meet a changing political situation and to face local problems more adequately, the national convention resolved that the party in each state and territory be authorized to adopt such plan of organization as they may think best suited to the views of the members of their party in their several localities." After a "spirited and heated debate", (9) the national convention reaffirmed the platform of principles laid down by the 1856 convention. The same position on foreign influence was entertained, Mr. J. J. Crittenden, a convention speaker, maintaining that "there are parties in the country that derive their power from the foreign vote, and that is the most enormous view of the question. That foreign vote has elected every President since the days of Andrew Jackson". (10)

In the August election in 1857 there were two important offices to be filled, those of congressman and state treasurer. Humphrey Marshall was the Know-Nothing candidate for re-election to Congress and he was opposed by Thomas Holt. The office of state treasurer was sought by James H. Garrard, Democratic candidate, and Thomas L. Jones, Know-Nothing candidate.

Intimations that the "brethren shall do better than in 1855" caused the Democratic organ no little concern and called them to challenge the Know-Nothing organ "to say distinctly if his party intends to suppress the foreign vote at the ensuing election". (11) The Democratic press felt that the temper of the Know-Nothing party was such that the awful scenes of August 6, 1855 might be repeated. (12) In this election the Democrats, who had for sometime been comparatively passive at election time, were making a real effort to win. In a speech, July 1, 1857, Thomas Holt, Democratic candidate said, "I

(9) Daily Democrat, June 4, 1857.

(10) Ibid., June 5, 1857

(11) Louisville Daily Democrat, June 28, 1857

(12) Ibid., July 1, 1857.

again affirm most solemnly, temperately, and firmly, that we will on the first Monday in August exercise the rights of suffrage conferred by the laws of the land and if we are driven from the polls it will be when every paving-stone in this city shall be watered by the blood of outraged freeman".(13) Another Democratic organ is quoted as saying "if we, as Democrats, are enlisted in performing our duty, as we heretofore were, our streets shall surpass the bloody carnage of "Waterloo". (14)

The question of having a police force adequate to deal with election disturbances came up again at this election. One Democratic organ suggested extra policemen, "composed of an equal number of respectable citizens from each ward", to aid the regular police on election day. (15) The Know-Nothing press maintained that the regular police force was sufficient to maintain law and order and then accused the Democrats of wanting to withdraw the entire police force on election day "to leave their blood-thirsty bullies to regulate the election after their own peculiar fashion". (16) The Louisville Daily Courier wrote that the Daily Journal had clearly misinterpreted an article contained in the Courier, which read as follows:

"The Mayor should do one of two things--wither appoint a sufficient police force to keep peace at the polls or else withdraw all protection and let the voters take care of themselves." (17)

The Mayor of Louisville, Mr. Pilcher, was asked specifically by the Democrats and he according to the Daily Democrat, "declines definitely to give us any police force at the polls such as suggested by the committee; and for the usual reason given by the organ". (18)

(13) Quoted in the Louisville Daily Journal, July 3, 1857.

(14) Ibid., July 13, 1857.

(15) Louisville Daily Democrat, July 27, 1857

(16) Quoted in Louisville Daily Courier, July 3, 1857.

(17) Louisville Daily Courier, June 27, 1857.

(18) Daily Democrat, July 29, 1857, a committee had called on the Mayor and suggested the plan of having extra policemen as stated above.

Mayor Pilcher issued a proclamation closing "houses of taverns and coffee houses and not to sell any spiritous liquors on election day, from the rising of the sun till the going down of the same". (19)

With the increase in power of the Democratic party in Louisville the question of the eligibility of naturalized citizens was a major issue. The Democratic organ contended that in case of doubt as to the eligibility of naturalized citizens the individual should be given the benefit of the doubt. Of course, the Know-Nothings felt that the doubt should be "construed in favor of the country". The position of the Know-Nothings was that foreigners were not fit to exercise the rights of citizens until all the requirements had been met. (20)

The Attorney General, James Harlow, gave an opinion on this naturalization question, July 27, 1857:

1. County courts have no power to naturalize foreigners.
2. No records of naturalization from other states are valid unless "attested by the clerk thereof, with the seal of the court annexed and certified by the Judge.."
3. A foreigner must reside in the state two years after Naturalization, that is as a citizen before he can vote and sixty days in the precinct as a citizen. (21)

The previous practice had been that foreigners who had fulfilled residence requirements could vote just as soon as they were naturalized. The Democrats refused to accept this opinion and urged that every election conducted according to Attorney General Harlow's opinion should be contested. Commenting on the decision, the Louisville Daily Courier said, "He cannot make a naturalized citizen live two years in the state after naturalization before voting unless he makes a native-born citizen reside the same length of time after he is twenty-one years of age before voting". (22)

(19) Ibid., August 1, 1857.

(20) Louisville Daily Journal, August 1, 1857.

(21) Louisville Daily Journal, August 1, 1857

(22) Louisville Daily Courier, July 30, 1857.

Actual disturbances on election day were few though there was the usual disagreement between Democrats and Know-Nothings over the extent of the violence. In the middle wards things went off quietly but in the first and eighth wards, both having a huge German population, there were a number of disturbances. In the first ward the total vote was 1400 but only one-half of that was actually polled, (23) In the eighth ward "every dirty trick was resorted to by the Know-Nothings to secure voters." A number of people were assaulted. (24) According to the Louisville Daily Journal "never was there a more peaceful election. The Sag Nichts made desperate effort, polling within 150 of their entire strength, while more than a thousand American voters were left unpolled. The usual overwhelming American majority.....induced a carelessness much to be regretted". (25) With reference to the Democratic contention that many Democratic voters had been intimidated, the Journal stated that "the suppressed vote is nearly all American". (26)

In the city. Marshall polled 2,910 votes to 1,852 for Holt and Jones polled 2,882 votes to 1,794 for Garrard. (27) A comparison between the votes polled in November, 1856 and August, 1857, shows a falling off of votes.

<u>November, 1856</u>	<u>August, 1857</u>
Fillmore, 3,830	Marshall 2,910
Buchanan, 2,014	Holt, 1,852

There was a falling off of the vote of about 1,096 votes: "of that 162 were from the side of Democracy, 920 from Americans". (28)

In Jefferson County the vote stood:

<u>For Congress, 7th District</u>	<u>For Treasurer</u>
Marshall, 3,926	Jones 3,859
Holt, 2,828	Garrard, 2,754

(23) Louisville Daily Democrat, August 4, 1857

(24) Louisville Daily Courier, July 30, 1857.

(25) Louisville Daily Journal, August 4, 1857.

(26) Ibid., August 5, 1857.

(27) Ibid., August 4, 1857; and Louisville Daily Democrat August 4, 1857.

(28) Louisville Daily Journal, August 5, 1857.

For the state as a whole Garrard, Democratic candidate, was elected state treasurer over Jones, Know-Nothing candidate, by a vote of 65,590 to 53,476. Eight Democrats and two Know-Nothings were elected to Congress, sixty-one Democrats and thirty-nine Know-Nothings were elected to the House of Representatives, and thirteen Democrats and seven Know-Nothings were elected to the Senate. The new Senate had twenty Know-Nothings and eighteen Democrats. (29)

In the year 1858 there were four elections in Kentucky in which the citizens of Louisville took part. The most important election of that year was that of August 2, which was significant from one viewpoint, because the Democrats at that time roused themselves and greatly increased their local party machine.

In January, 1858, an election for Judge of the Seventh Judicial District was made necessary because of the resignation of Judge W. F. Bullock. The Know-Nothings put up Peter B. Muir for their candidate and the Democrats didn't select a candidate. They would likely have supported T. J. Throap but they learned that he was a Know-Nothing so that cost him Democratic support. (30) Muir was elected by a majority of 1,717 votes. (31) According to a Democrat paper "he might have been defeated by Mr. Throap if the Democrats had not considered him(Throap) a Know-Nothing". (32)

In the election for U. S. Senator, which took place January 8, 1858, Lazarus W. Powell, Democrat and former governor of Kentucky was elected over Garret Davis, Know-Nothing candidate by a vote of 80 to 54. (33)

On Wednesday, January 7, W. E. Benson was nominated for city marshal for the election, January 16, 1858. (34) The Democrats did not even bother to make a nomination, thus making the election "one-sided and therefore of little interest". (35) In fact, so apathetic was the Democratic organization

(29) Collins, Vol. 1, p 78.

(30) Louisville Daily Journal, January 2, 1858; Louisville Daily Courier January 4, 1858.

(31) Louisville Daily Journal, January 4, 1858

(32) Louisville Daily Courier, January 4, 1858.

(33) Collins, History, p. 79.

(34) Louisville Daily Journal, January 7, 1858.

(35) Louisville Daily Courier, January 18, 1858.

that some Democratic organs commended the candidacy of Mr. Benson. (36) Mr. Alex Gilmore, Independent, opposed Benson but he was beaten, Benson receiving a majority of 500 votes. (37)

Again in the municipal elections, April 3, the Democrats did not openly nominate candidates for city offices. A Democratic organ published a complete slate of candidates, running for office on a Citizens Ticket, and being chosen as candidates for the respective offices "without regard to party." (38) The Know-Nothing organization did not kindly accept the "humble acknowledgment" by the Democrats that their party was in the minority, for in the selection of a so-called Citizens Ticket, the Know-Nothings sensed a Democratic scheme to draw Know-Nothing votes. (39) In following this plan as they did in several election contests, the Democrats underestimated the importance of efficient local organization, which they probably had never had.

The election went off comparatively quietly although the Democratic organ witnessed the usual outrages and the usual illegal voting. The total vote cast for City Councilmen, in aggregate, was 2,181 for the Americans, and 937 for the Democrats, a majority of 1244. (40) In the Third ward the race was unusually close, Dr. Mat Pyles being defeated by forty-eight votes. He was so sure that he had legally won that he threatened to contest the election, but did not. (41)

As stated above the August elections of 1857 marked the re-entrance of the Democrats into local politics. This election also signalled the end of the Know-Nothing party because the results of the election so undeniably showed the great change taking place in political alignments. The Know-Nothing forces,

(36) Louisville Daily Democrat, January 7, 1858.

(37) Louisville Daily Courier, January 19, 1858.

(38) Ibid., March 29, 1858.

(39) Louisville Daily Journal, March 24, 1858 and April 3, 1858.

(40) Ibid., April 5, 1858 (The Journal refers to "Democratic" candidates and not "citizens" candidates).

(41) Louisville Daily Courier, April 5, 1858.

faced with the fact that in Louisville alone was there any strength in the Kentucky-Know-Nothing organization, watched the Democratic preparations anxiously. There were reports of Democratic happenings in Louisville that showed the "hands of the Democratic managers of Washington" plainly visible. (42) In the various wards of the city the Democrats organized squads of one-hundred men for each ward for the sole purpose of getting out a full Democratic vote.

Both parties were anxious for the election to be conducted peacefully. Unlike former elections these solicitations were more practical. For example, "officers of the election are equally divided between the two parties. (43) This provision met one of the main objections of the Democratic party and was certainly a great step forward in the peaceful conducting of elections. The Know-Nothing organ had maintained for some time that the cause of the disturbance at the polls was due to the attempt of many foreigners to vote illegally. The Louisville Daily Courier, then, tried to impress upon the foreigner the importance of producing their certificates of naturalization at the polls "unless their qualification is known to one of the judges or the sheriff." (44) Another measure that made for a more peaceful election was the provision for more polling places in some of the wards: namely, the first, second, and eighth wards each had no polling places. (45) The usual police protection was provided with the additional safeguard that three military companies were stationed at the armory awaiting orders from the Mayor should there be any disturbance; "every necessary precaution " had been taken.

Only in one instance was there any bloodshed in this election. In the sixth ward an altercation took place between a Mr. Standiford and Captain

(42) Louisville Daily Journal, July 10, 1858.

(43) Louisville Daily Courier, July 31, 1858.

(44) *Ibid.*, July 29, 1858. (quotation from Revised Statutes p. 286)

(45) Louisville Daily Journal, August 3, 1858. (The First and Eighth wards both had large German populations.)

L. H. Rousseau on the steps of the courthouse. Both men were wounded. The cause of the trouble was "a personal matter" more than any political difference. At the first and second ward polls there were several "fist and skill encounters"; several foreigners in the second ward were beaten and driven away from the polls. "That conflicts there were at the polls were caused by the democrats trying to cast illegal votes, according to the Louisville Daily Journal which stated, "if this had not been done the public peace would doubtless have remained unbroken." (46) The Democrats claimed that up until noon they were leading and that in the afternoon the Democratic lead was overcome by fraud and voting Know-Nothing bullies. (47)

The results of the election in August, 1858, in Louisville are as follows:

For	Know-Nothing	Democratic
Appellate judge	Wheat, 3,654	Wood 3,565
Appellate clerk	McKee 3,680	Revill, 3,488
County judge	Thurston 3,710	Pyles 3,467
Sheriff	Magowan 3,246	Ellis 3,342
County jailor	Thomas 3,539	Batman 3,645
County attorney	Jones 3,595	
Coroner	Buchanan 3,511	Forsythe 3,457
Assessor	Harrison 3,561	
Surveyor	Davis 3,429	Robb 3,573

In Louisville Batman and Robb, Democratic candidates, were elected. All other city officers elected were Know-Nothings. (48) In Jefferson County all the Democratic candidates were elected. (49) In the state Revill, Democratic candidate for Appellate Clerk, defeated McKee 68,440 to 55,199 having a majority of 13,341 votes. Wood also defeated Judge Wheat. (50)

The Democratic organ took the election of August 2, 1858, to indicate that

- (46) Louisville Daily Journal, August 4, 1858.
- (47) Louisville Daily Courier, August 3, 1858.
- (48) Louisville Daily Journal, August 3, 1858.
- (49) Louisville Daily Courier, August 4, 1858.
- (50) Collins, History, p. 80.

Humphrey Marshall would be defeated as Know-Nothing candidate for Congress in 1859. According to the Democratic organ there had been a steady increase of Democratic strength. The following figures demonstrate this. (51)

<u>August, 1857, election</u>	Holt	Marshall
Jefferson County	2,828	3,925
Henry County	953	663
Oldham County	530	364
Shelby County	668	1,133
	<u>4,979</u>	<u>6,085</u>
		<u>4,979</u>
		1,106 majority

<u>August, 1858, election</u>	Revill	Mckee
Jefferson County	3,493	3,732
Henry County	1,047	631
Oldham County	490	232
Shelby County	712	1,095
	<u>5,742</u>	<u>5,781</u>
		<u>5,742</u> 39 majority

One rather amusing incident resulted from this election. Batman, Democrat, had defeated Thomas, Know-Nothing candidate and chairman of the Know-Nothing State Executive Committee, in the race for county Jailer. Batman was refused a certificate of election by the election commissioners, two of whom, Joe Clements and Sam Matlock, were substitute commissioners. These two commissioners checked over the poll books and declared invalid enough votes cast in favor of Batman to make Thomas the Jailer. Thomas at first said he would not take the office under the circumstances but he later reconsidered. Batman took legal action by petitioning Judge Muir to force the election commission to certify him (Batman) as Jailer. On Monday, November 15, 1858, Judge Muir denied Batman's petition and Thomas remained County Jailer. (52)

The election of August 2, 1858, "closed forever the hopes of the Know-Nothing party". In the United State Senate there were only two Know-Nothing

(51) Louisville Daily Courier, August 10, 1858.

(52) Louisville Daily Journal, August 5, 1858, August 6, 1858; Louisville Daily Courier, August 6, 1858.

Senators, Crittenden and Bell of Kentucky, and they were both doomed. (53)

- (53) Louisville Daily Courier, August 3, 1858. Lazarus Powell, Democrat, had been elected to the United State Senate in January, 1858, and the following year John C. Breckenridge, Democrat, was elected to the United States Senate to take office in 1854. See Connelly & Coulter, Vol. II. pp. 849, 850.

CHAPTER VII

THE KNOW-NOTHING PARTY BECOMES THE OPPOSITION

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Prominent Kentucky historians regard the August election of 1858 as the time when the Know-Nothing party ended.(1)

By the close of the year 1858 the main principles for which the Know-Nothings had stood had been pushed aside by the increasing concern over slavery. Fortunately for the Know-Nothing leaders the Democratic party was splitting up. Buchanan's administration had divided the Democratic party and the only chance for the Know-Nothing organization was to get together the remains of their own party, the Whigs and the Old-Line Whigs and the anti-Lecompton Democrats into a united party of opposition. In preparation for the election for governor in Kentucky in August, 1859, the Louisville Daily Journal issued an announcement of an opposition convention to be held in Louisville, February 22; this announcement urged "harmony of action" free from "jealousy between Americans and Old-Line Whigs". (4)

Prior to the meeting of the opposition convention the Democrats of the state met in Frankfort January 8, to nominate candidates for the state election in August, 1859. This convention nominated Beriah Magoffin for governor; Lewis Boyd for Lieutenant-governor; Grant Greene for Auditor; James Garrard for Treasurer; and A. J. James for Attorney General. Division in the Kentucky Democratic party was apparent since the nominees were all supporters of Buchanan's administration and since none of them were Old-Line Whigs. (5) The Louisville Daily Democrat answered this charge by saying the exclusion of Old-Line Whigs

(1) Connelly & Coulter, p. 851, "After the election 1858 the group feeling of the American party ended and the best that could be done was to form an "opposition party".

(2) Rhodes, pp. 279-301.

(3) Whigs that had been co-operating with the Democrats.

(4) Louisville Daily Journal, October 23, 1858.

(5) Ibid., January 10, 1859.

from state officies was "purely accidental". (6)

Referring to the opposition convention to meet in Louisville, February 22, 1859, the Louisville Daily Courier suggested that the convention form a new politcal party called the "Free Nigger Party" --"those who will probably be in the meeting have abandoned the name Know-Nothing with which they started out in 1854 and "they now call themselves the 'opposition'". (7)

The leaders of the opposition made a direct appeal to the Democratic opponents of Buchanan's administration by announcing the leading aim of the opposition party to be " the prostration of the Buchanan Democracy" (8) and "op- position to the corrupt administration of the General Government". (9) Ac- cording to the Journal the action of the Democratic State Convention made the "path of opposition" clear and led allopponents of the Buchanan administration to look for their only hope to the opposition convention in Louisville. (10)

One purpose in calling the opposition convention that attracted some men of all political creeds, even though they might be beaten by the Democrats, was to demonstrate to the Northern Conservatives that there was a large body of Southern conservatives that had no sympathy with "bogus Democrats". The Kentucky opposition party followed the lead of a smilar group in Virginia in the hope that they could effect a union between northern and southern con- servativies and "elect a conservative and a national statesman to the presidency". (11)

The meeting of the opposition in Louisville in February was admittedly large; the Daily Democrat wrote that there were about 1,500 delegates, all "showing a good deal of enthusiasm, especially on the nomination of Bell." (12)

- (6) Louisville Daily Democrat, January 15, 1859.
- (7) Louisville Daily Courier, February 14, 1859.
- (8) Louisville Daily Journal, January 18, 1859.
- (9) Louisville Daily Journal, February 22, 1859.
- (10) Ibid., January 19, 1859.
- (11) Ibid., January 27, 1859.
- (12) Louisville Daily Democrat, February 23, 1859.

The resolution passed by this convention announced the opposition purposes to be to "prevent disunion". give peace on the slavery question, work for an economical and honest administration of government, oppose the importation of "foreign felons".

The opposition nominated J. F. Bell for Governor; Alfred H. Allen for Lieutenant-Governor; James Harlow, Attorney General; Thomas S. Page, Auditor; Daugherty White, Treasurer, (13)

The Know-Nothing organization in Louisville maintained its identity until after the opposition convention. In fact, the Know-Nothings were considered as one powerful faction in the opposition convention, and there was nothing to indicate in the calling of the convention that the Know-Nothing organization in Louisville had ceased to function. The Know-Nothing ward organizations met as such during the month of January, 1859, in an endeavor to work up enthusiasm among all members of Know-Nothing councils "and all those opposed to Democratic misrule". (14)

But with the meeting of the opposition convention in Louisville, February, 1859, and the enthusiasm shown there, many were curious to know if the Know-Nothings in Louisville could "all be transferred to the new party bodily." (15) Apparently so far, just four days after the opening of the opposition convention, the Louisville Daily Journal carried an announcement of a local opposition meeting to be held February 26, 1859, for the purpose of nominating candidates for the Common Council and the Board of Aldermen. (16)

Thus it was that by the time of the April election for municipal officers the Louisville Daily Journal, former violent Know-Nothing champion, was addressing its readers as "men of the opposition". (17)

(13) Louisville Daily Courier, February 23, 1859. See this paper for full statement of resolutions.

(14) Louisville Daily Journal, January 14, 1858.

(15) Louisville Daily Democrat, February 24, 1859.

(16) Louisville Daily Journal, February 25, 1859.

(17) Ibid., April 1, 1859.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

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One well-grounded principle of Know-Nothingism, a real Kentucky product, remained a factor in Kentucky politics; that was the traditional Kentucky stand for the Union. Alarm of the people of Kentucky for the welfare of the Union led to the calling of an opposition convention, February, 1860, in Frankfort for the purpose of nominating a "union" man for president. This meeting, composed largely of Whigs and former Know-Nothings refused to discuss the slavery question and called on the people to preserve the Union. (1) All of the delegates to this convention were not Whigs or Know-Nothings, for in Kentucky fear for the Union ^{be} caused many union meetings to/called "without distinction of party seeking to devise means to stay the course of events". (2) The February convention recommended J. J. Crittenden "to the favorable consideration of a National Union Convention as worthy of the exalted position of President". (4)

As a result of the sentiment for the union the Constitutional Union Party was formed and its candidate, John Bell carried Kentucky in the Presidential election of 1860, polling 58,016 votes to 52,836 for Beckenridge, 40,372 for Douglas, and 1,366 for Lincoln.

Thus in Kentucky, the impetus given by several years agitation for the preservation of the Union was sufficiently strong to give that party (Constitutional Union) the victory in Kentucky when the rest of the country was hopelessly divided on the slavery question. To the very last the Unionists in Kentucky had insisted on dodging the slavery issue.

(1) Register of Kentucky State Historical Society, No. 67, p. 174.

(2) Connelly & Coulter, Vol. II, p. 852.

(3) Collins, Vol. I, p. 84.

(4) Ibid., p. 83.

As is implied in the preceeding paragraphs, the strong nativist movement in Kentucky was partly responsible for keeping Kentucky in the Union when other southern states seceded. The period between the collapse of the Whig party and the election of 1860 had witnessed the growth of the Democratic party in Kentucky despite the fact that traditionally, the Democratic party had been anathema to Kentuckians. But with the death of the Whig party, many whigs were won over to the Democratic party because southern rights were more vitally important than abolitionism and partly because the Democratic party in Kentucky modified its program sufficiently to win many Whigs. The Democrats even had an "internal improvement" wing in Kentucky! Because of the growing importance of the Democratic party sentiment for the preservation of the Union might have died out had it not been for the rise of the Know-Nothing party.

Reference had been made to the fact that the nativist movement was not powerful enough to sidetrack the slavery issue. This is more understandable in the South than in the North, for the South was in every way--socially, politically, and economically--interested in the preservation of the system of slavery. In the North, however, the slavery issue was primarily political and less important to the people of the North than the presence of foreigners in the great American cities. Yet despite the long life of the Know-Nothing party in the North, the slavery issue caused the death of the nativist movement.

In dealing with the local aspects of the Know-Nothing movement the question naturally arises, "who was responsible for the outrages attending the elections during the Know-Nothing domination?"--in a word, the Know-Nothings. This fact is difficult to deduce from the newspapers because of the extreme partisanship that characterized them in that period. From the record one feels that the foreign and Catholic elements were always on the defensive. Certainly the Know-Nothing organ, the Louisville Daily Journal was aggressive in its condemnation of foreigners and Catholics. Then, the arguments of the Know-Nothings were more inclined to appeal to the passions of the men rather than to their

intelligence. The imponderables of Catholicism and the strangeness of foreigners were used by the Know-Nothing leaders to arouse the fears of native Americans that fundamental American principles were endangered. From another view, the secrecy attending the Know-Nothing organization increased the fears of foreigners; a sort of vicious circle prevailed.

For a period of at least four years the entire city government of Louisville was in the hands of the nativists. During that time violence at election time was the usual thing. Certainly the city administrations must bear some responsibility for the difficulties that arose almost every election day. Thus any aggression that started from foreign sources may have been provoked by the unfair administration of government under the Know-Nothings.

In addition to the more or less tangible reasons for placing the responsibility for violence on the Know-Nothings, we have the evidence contained in histories. Historians dealing with the Know-Nothing movement in a general way, place the blame for violence on the Know-Nothing party. (5) This is also the verdict of contemporary historians. (6)

Several other facts about Know-Nothingism in Louisville may be cited. An authority on municipal government states that in the decade before the Civil War "municipal government was in the formative stage. During the forties and fifties many changes were taking place". (7) In Louisville the presence of the Know-Nothing party produced a change in local party tactics; probably this was true of most of the cities of the Mississippi Valley. With the advent of the Know-Nothings local party machines became better organized and began to make

(5) Connelly & Coulter, History of Kentucky, p. 348.

Wilson, Samuel, History of Kentucky, p. 226. footnote.

(6) Memorial History of Louisville, Vol. I., p. 123.

Perrin, History of Kentucky, p. 329.

(7) Munro, William Bennett, Government of American Cities, MacMillan & Company, New York, 1916, p. 11. Munro further states that "at various points one encountered the beginning of a movement which aimed to make the mayorality a semi-independent organ of city government-chosen directly by the people."

nominations for city offices. For a time this practice gave the Know-Nothings advantages in municipal elections. (8) In a negative sense the rule, or mis-rule, of the Know-Nothing party in Louisville showed the need for better supervised elections, more polling places, and a more efficient police force.

The Know-Nothing movement called the attention of the American people to the presence of foreigners more forcibly than any previous nativist movement. This was probably due to the national character of the party. Whether or not the exclusion or expulsion for foreigners at the time was important, certainly the presence of the foreigner in a rapidly growing industrial society created certain political and social problems that demanded solution. By calling the attention of the people to the presence of the foreigner the process of assimilation was made more difficult. A problem was created that had not existed before.

The secrecy of the Know-Nothing party and its religious prejudices were "founded on principles contrary to fundamental American institutions". (9) According to Macy the only real service of the Know-Nothing party was the aid it gave to the dissolution of the Whig party and to the preparation of the way for the union of the Northern Whigs with the anti-slavery extension elements of the other parties into the Republican party. (10)

(8) See: Connelly & Coulter, History of Kentucky, Vol. II, p. 845
(quotation taken from Kentucky Yeoman, August 11, 1854.)

(9) Macy, Jesse, Political Parties in the United States, 1846-1861,
MacMillan & Company, New York, 1911, p. 180. (Macy quotes Henry Ward Beecher who referred to the Know-Nothing Councils as "the catacombs of freedom".)

(10) Grant, U. S., Memoirs, Vol. 1, p. 169 - "Most of my friends had known me as an officer in the army with Whig proclivities. They had been on the same side and on the death of their party had become members of the American party. There was a lodge near me and I was invited to join it. I accepted the invitation was initiated and attended a meeting just one week later; and never went to another afterwards".

(11) Ibid., p. 418.

The phenomenal rise to power of the Know-Nothing party is one of the most interesting incidents in American history. As an indication of the importance and potentialities of third party movements the career of the Know-Nothing party may well serve as a lesson to people of our own day.

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